



## Taken

*J.C. Owens*

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Kidnapping the brother of a mob boss was madness. If only it had stayed that simple. It had all gone wrong. Sent as a mercenary to kidnap Kirith Martinelli from his tropical island home, Landon finds himself on the wrong end of a job gone bad. But there's more to Kirith than meets the eye; he's the brother of feared mob boss Enzo Martinelli, and he's taken Landon as his captive. Kirith makes Landon an offer he can't refuse: stay with him for three months, until he tires of Landon's body, and then Landon may go free.

Landon, fearing his own criminal family more than the man before him, quickly agrees. Three months will buy him enough time for his brothers to lose his scent, and then freedom will be his. But that freedom has a steeper price than Landon bargained for as he's drawn into the secrets of Kirith's past. He can't ignore the sadness and loss behind his captor's beautiful eyes, and Landon finds himself wondering if three months will be enough...for either of them.

## Taken Details

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Author : J.C. Owens

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## From Reader Review Taken for online ebook

### Shira Anthony says

This was an intense read. Landon is a mercenary, but not by choice - he has been abused by his brothers and isolated from the real world. And when he is captured by Kirith, the powerful and gorgeous son of a famous mob boss, Landon is more than a bit overwhelmed. Kirith spares Landon's life and offers him a "deal" - spend 3 months with him on his private island and serve as his personal "boy toy," and Landon will have his freedom. Landon has nothing to lose, and he is drawn to his beautiful and seemingly all-powerful captor. But there is more to Kirith than meets the eye - hidden pain and longing, and before the three months are over, both men will lose their hearts.

The setup is pretty typical for a master/slave M/M story. And although there are some uncomfortable moments, Landon's desire for the mysterious and charismatic Kirith makes their sexual encounters more than just non-con. That said, the story devolves into a different type of master/slave relationship (and not between our two lovers) which is far darker and more disturbing. This is where I had a difficult time with the book and, without spoiling the plot for real, the subject matter is, at times, hard to bear. Yes, there IS a happy ending, although not all sunshine and roses given the subject matter. Still, I recommend this book- it is engaging and hard to put down.

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### Diane says

*Taken* is a bit of a rollercoaster ride. At first the story seems really dark; then it turns into a very sweet romance... but just when the reader gets comfortable, it turns disturbing again. I think I have literary whiplash! LOL

It also has a nice tropical island setting for most of the story which was nice to read on a cold snowy day!

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### Wren says

This is mostly an adventure story, with some romance in the middle. Landon gets captured when the mission he's on goes awry, but that turns out to be not so bad because he gets to live on a tropical island with a beautiful man who wants him as a companion for three months. Given that Landon comes from an abusive situation with two brothers who treat him like dirt, he comes to like this new life. Then there is the break up where Kirith thinks Landon is too young and has too much ahead in life to stay with him, so he hooks him up with some friends who do black ops sort of stuff. Landon goes because he thinks Kirith has tired of him.

Another attempt at kidnapping Kirith is successful; Landon and friends go to the rescue, but Kirith's been

broken by drugs the madman has given him. There follows the period of will he or won't he recover.

I'm not a fan of the 'he's got his whole life ahead of him' trope (or 'he's too good for me' trope), but I liked the characters enough to get over it. Kirith is mysterious and brooding. Landon is smart but naive. The secondary characters - Kirith's daughter and brother - are pretty well drawn so you come to have feelings for them too.

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### **Rinkyx says**

3.5 stars overall. Would have been a solid 4 but i felt the ending was rushed and a lot of things that happened were left unanswered. I would have liked to know what happened with Nate and the other mercenaries and who Kirith's friends who took them were. Also, i hated how the villain got a fast death rather than a slow painful one, which he deserved after putting Kirith through all that abuse and Chase. Enzo should have skinned him alive. I expected him to get worse but he didn't. And Enzo was supposed to be the punisher but he gave him a swift ending and i was not having it.

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### **Phaney says**

[I have to admit, reading about the torture that Kirith is subjected to and what it does to him was killing me. Rape is one thing, but this utter, repeat

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### **Leisha says**

Rating overview

Writing: ★★★★★

Story: ★★★★★

Characters: ★★★★★

Overall: ★★★★★ (5)

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This was a rather complex story - Landon is a mercenary who is brought to a deserted island by his brothers in order to kidnap the brother of a feared mob boss, Kirith. When things don't go as planned, Landon is the one who is held captive for three months. Once again, things do not go as anticipated and a complex story of love, obsession, captivity and freedom begins to unravel...

Beautifully written with an extraordinary attention to detail. The story was rich and the characters were multi-dimensional. I especially loved Enzo (the feared mob boss, brother of Kirith) who, albeit a little scary, had a real soft spot for Kirith and his daughter which added a great element to the story.

All in all, highly recommended!

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## **J. Taylor says**

3.5 Hate the cover so much but the story in it is so great.

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## **DarienMoya says**

**^^MY SURPRISE HIT!^^**

More of my reviews and thoughts on my blog PANTS OFF REVIEWS

### **5 ?? in 2018**

Taken was my surprise hit of the year. Believe me I had no expectations going into this book; I was expecting an ok read. However, for all that is sweet and holy I fell in love. I was expecting the captured man; to fall in love with the person who captured him you know all that predictability. Let me tell you; I got awesmazingness.

Landon is to kidnap the brother of a mob boss. He is not looking forward to the job, but he is a slave to his life as a mercenary. In addition, he lives by the rules of his brothers, who at every opportunity abuse him. He dreams of the day he can escape and leave the life of a criminal behind. His brothers has other plans for him. That includes the guy who ordered the kidnapping of the mob bosses brother, and the look in his eyes says his service as a killer will not be needed. In the future, his ass would probably tell you why.

From the get go the mission smells of doom. A private island, shits way too quiet and there seems to be some sort of party. Landon worst fear is to hurt innocent people and he hopes that it won't come to that. Everything is going way too smoothly, entering the house and waiting out the victim. Until all hell breaks loose and Landon realizes that, his escape might come in the form of death.

Landon is captured by the very man he was sent to capture, and Kirith is all sorts of pissed. By the look in the man's eye Landon knows he's about to be used and abused. Seems his life leads him to one doom after another. When Kirith has a change of heart and offers Landon the deal of his life, he would be a fool to refuse. Is his pride worth more than his life? **'Oh Hell No'**. They both never expected to fall in love, because this was supposed to be about sex, and about Landon gaining his freedom.

The book then becomes a rollercoaster ride of awesome. Its gut wrenching, sad as fuck, sexy as hell and downright a smash freaking hit. Landon and Kirith are like molten hot lava thrown on your skin. Yes people, it burns so good. The events of the book I never saw coming, and it made my heart ache. Be prepared to be surprised, because if you honestly said you saw it coming then clearly "*you are lying*". I warn you that this book is no easy love, and some readers might find the relationship of Landon and Kirith questionable. They are not perfect characters, and there is no perfect HEA. Because when life hands you lemons, you just squash the fuck out of them.

I was intrigued and am in love with a few other characters from this story, and am hoping they get their own story. I Want More!

**FYI: This book contains some hard limits. Implied rape/abuse. Not explicit but the aftermath is quite clear and depressing.**

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### **Gabbi says**

Wow! Taken by JC Owens is a rollercoaster ride of angst, love, deception and romance. I truly experienced a range of emotions while I read this book. Honestly, I'm glad I had some tissues handy, because I needed it. This is not a light read and it was perfect for me, because I was in the mood for a darker, emotionally driven romance. This is the second book I've read by Ms. Owens and she's already becoming a quick favorite of mine.

I think the blurb does an excellent job at describing the story and I don't want to spoil it. What it doesn't tell you is how on edge the story will make you feel, and how it made me feel almost desperate at times for the two heroes to find some happiness together. They are enemies at first, but despite themselves, they can't help but fall for each other. Both men are stubborn and their communication skills aren't always the greatest, which causes them pain and even a separation, but with some determination and the power of love, the ending left me with a smile on my face.

Both men are likeable heroes. Neither one of them are perfect, as a matter of fact, they are FAR from perfect. They've both done things in the past that they regret, but men have to live with the consequences of their actions, but even though they aren't angels...there is definitely something likeable and redeemable about them that made me totally fall for both of them.

There is a lot of intrigue, action and suspense in this book and one of the heroes literally goes through his own personal hell because he is kidnapped and raped. (not by other hero) I know this alone will cause many readers to possibly turn away from reading this book, and I certainly understand it. But, I will say even though I cried for him, I loved watching him rise above all of the terrible things that was done to him and once again start to heal and blossom with the man he loves. This book showed me that the power of love is strong and can work through many obstacles.

I highly recommend Taken to those who are in the mood for some heavy angst along with their romance. The heroes are fabulous and so good together; the story is fast-paced and kept me on the edge of my seat. It's a dark book with a definite bright light at the end, and I truly loved it.

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### **Elisa Rolle says**

There are various points of this book I liked, it has an high impact on an emotional level, it has a good pace in the thriller sub-plot and the supporting characters are good, sometime even better than the main characters (the relationship between Enzo and Marcello, even in the way it's ended by the author, is probably the most original side of this novel). What probably nagged me most is that I read this novel more as a "contemporary" fantasy than a real thriller-romance novel: the way the romance between Landon and Kirith starts, the sudden stop of the thriller plot to the as much as suddenly starting sometime later, with even more rage and violence, all the mafia-drugs family plot, it was a bit too much.

Landon is an unwilling mercenary, forced by his older brothers with violence and coercion; already here to

me was a little too much, but soon after, in the aftermath of a failed mission, Landon is captive of Kirith, the second heir of a drugs lord, who wants to take his vengeance against the man who sent enemies in his home, and danger near his daughter, having Landon raped and enslaved. Of course, being this a romance, and romance cannot be born from rape, Kirith will change his mind, and Landon will become a willing pawn in a very mild claim: 3 months of Landon acting as Kirith's boy toy and he will be free. I will not go further in the plot, enough to say that there is another sudden turn that, in a way, will help Landon to rebalance his relationship with Kirith and, even if it can sound harsh, will give deepness to Kirith: until then Kirith was too "stylish", too perfect, even a bit boring.

As I said, I found probably more interesting the supporting characters more than Landon and Kirith: above all Enzo, who, in his multi-facets personality, gave deepness even to the villain, Marcello. Another character that was interesting, even if not one that many will like with his pretty face and his lack of rebellion, is Chase: I think that a story centred around Enzo or Chase, even not among them, would be a good one.

I advice the future reader of this romance, that this is a type of romance that not all will like: rape, violence, BDSM that is more a punishment than a different type of relationship between lovers, these are all side of the story that will alienate many readers. But if you want a story were the bad are badder and the good are not so good after all, than this is a good example.

<http://www.amazon.com/dp/B004LGTJFG/?...>

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### **Samantha says**

3.5 rounded up.

Landon's past has been a series of shadows and pain. After the loss of his parents at a young age, he's been tormented by his brothers for years. As a mercenary, he's been forced to do things he never wanted to, has blood coating his hands. Their latest mission is the result of his brother being captured. It seems simple enough, kidnap a man and bring him back.

But no mission is ever so simple. The men on the island are prepared for them, and Landon soon finds himself held hostage by Kirith, the brother to a well-known mob boss. Their first meetings are that of anger and contempt, but they soon reach an agreement, one that will give Landon his freedom. As they grow to learn each other, bodies and minds, Landon begins to wonder if freedom from this man is what he really wants after all.

***"Kirith holds great sadness in his heart, more than any man should have to bear. I have worried over the years as I watched those he brought here, worried that he would never find someone strong enough for him. He isn't an easy person, but well worth the trials, you will find. You, Landon, are strong enough. You have a fire in you that will match him, keep him from sinking into his depressions. For the first time, I have met someone who could save him from himself and the past."***

I wasn't necessarily excited to read this book, but I had to for a couple challenges, so I kind of forced myself into starting it. At first, I was very confused. The opening chapter was fairly vague and I wasn't sure what I was getting myself into. When I finally understood, I was like "Oh, okay, gotcha." - but still not gripped.

While I wasn't the most amazed by this story, I did grow to enjoy it. I love things with a dash of darkness to

them, and this certainly had elements of that. My biggest problems were in the quick development of Kirith and Landon's relationship. One minute he's threatening Landon, and the next they're so head-over-heels. I just wanted a smoother transition.

What I liked most about the book were the characters, particularly Enzo and Laura. I was immediately drawn to Enzo for his killer demeanor. I mean, come on, who doesn't find crazy psychopaths hot, right? But in all seriousness, there was just something to him that I was drawn to. And Laura, she was just such a sweet little character in the midst of such a dark, dangerous world. I also enjoyed Michael, Stephanie, and Trent. Actually, I'd love to see Trent have his own story. Why not?

I am looking forward to reading about Enzo and Chase. It'll be interesting to see how one broken heart can unfreeze another. All in all, a pretty good book. It was just missing a bit of something special for me.

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### **JustJen "Miss Conduct" says**

#### **3.5 stars**

Not sure what I was thinking, but this story went in a bunch of different directions than what I expected. Poor Landon was abused, though thankfully not used, by his evil brothers for years. When their latest mission goes belly up, Landon is captured by their intended target. Just when you think things are going to get down and dirty, slave/torture/abuse style, things take a different turn. Landon offers himself to Kirith completely for three months if he will set him free and clear after that point.

Kirith is part of a mob family run by his brother, Enzo. Enzo has a strong dislike for Landon and cannot get over him trying to hurt his family. Saving Landon though, is the way he handled the attack when he ran into Kirith's daughter, Laura.

Anyway, things roll along for them during the three months, and while feelings grow, Kirith sends Landon away after the time is up. Kirith is unable to leave his island and believes the isolation would be too much for Landon. So, he teaches him skills and sets him up with a company so he can start another life.

Then, things take another unexpected turn where it actually does turn into slave/torture/abuse, though the details are pretty vague. You get the idea though, and things get pretty bad before rescue happens.

I liked the story, but there were times I felt it dragged on a bit, mostly due to the style of telling, instead of showing. That is hard to explain, but while things were happening, the story just didn't seem to be moving forward. I also didn't love how quickly certain things were resolved. Enzo taking care of Marcello, as well as the victim's recovery were a few. The recovery seemed to take a bit of time, but then the final wake up "I just had a horrible nightmare" turn around just seemed rather abrupt.

I enjoyed many of the characters here though, and while I'm not a huge fan of kids in my stories, Laura was a sweetheart. Would have liked to have had a bit more closure on the evil brothers' demise as well.

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### **Trix says**

I feel like this was a book of contradictions.

In the beginning, we have Kirith who forgives Landon for the assassination attempt and brings him to his bed, only to do the whole 'meet my parents" (in this case, brother and daughter) ritual. Then, both he and Landon get very sentimental realising the developing feelings they each have and suspecting the other feels the same. Only they avoid the matter and strongly believe the other would be better off alone. Kirith then turns into a caring lover/teacher out to make Landon a better man, or at least a better killer. Once the pupil outshines the master, Kirith sets him free in the world. This is shortly followed by Marcello managing to kidnap Kirith (after half the book praised the Martinelli's exceptional guard, protectiveness and power). The tables are turned and Kirith becomes this mindless sex doll, to replace Enzo, of all things, in Marcello's dark fantasies. (view spoiler)

Enough said. This book failed me in too many ways to count. The main idea held interest to me, but each character did a 180 turn throughout the book from weakling to strong and vice versa and all that in the span of 160 pages. I just couldn't bond with either Landon or Kirith and found the story dull.

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### **Susan65 says**

3.5

Started out one way....assumed I knew what was going to happen...got complacent, thought it was getting a bit tame, and a little lame..and then wtf..did not see that coming...at all...holy hell Batman...if you don't like torture or rape or hell, what's worse than that?

The plot was pretty decent, even if it felt a bit like i was being talked to instead being a part of the story. That may work for most but unfortunately the story telling didn't work too well for me, sadly.

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### **Skye Blue ?\*~??(``?)~\*? says**

This was hard to rate.

It started off pretty good...but looked like it was only going to be a 3 star read for me, but then it changed. The whole Marcello was a little too fast, and not enough details for me...but it still hooked me good. I'm glad that there wasn't a POOF all better magical moment, and that Kirith received, and continued to receive counseling.

Enzo intrigued me. I want more of his past, and hopeful that the next story is his and Chase's. (I haven't read the blurb yet...so crossing my fingers)

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### **Sammy Goode says**

I'm dazed...completely and totally blown. This novel...Taken...OMG! I was overwhelmed. I will admit to you that I have thrown my kindle across the room on more than one occasion. Grabbed it, turned it off, snapped the case shut...books can do this to me. But this book...I nearly broke the kindle in two...I had a death grip on it for the last fourth of this book--a grip so hard that I am surprised the screen did not shatter. I survived...I survived...in such a good way--such a damn good way.

Taken is the story of two men. The first, Landon, abused physically and mentally, forced into the life of a violent mercenary by his brothers and on the cusp of being sold to be a Drug lord's whore right after one last job. A job that leads to the other man...Kirith...a sensitive, loving man hardened by the death of his mother which he avenged by killing his own father. The very act forcing him to be banished to an island fortress with his young daughter to spend the rest of his life in the lap of luxury and yet totally alone, totally bereft of a love that he can trust. Until his island is breached by mercenaries hired by an enemy to kill Kirith. A team that has in its company a young man...a man who needed a savior...a man in need of love. And so begins the mating dance of Kirith and Landon...and we breathe a sigh of relief for finally all is right in this wonderful story. All is right until Kirith sends Landon away, his enemy returns to take him prisoner and months of drug-addled torture and rape leave their mark upon Kirith's psyche and soul...leaving him broken and seemingly beyond repair. Here is where I almost broke the kindle. And then the questions poured forth...Now who needs a savior? Now who needs a loving hand to draw him back from the abyss? How will he ever recover? How will he ever be able to love again?

This was an incredibly powerful story. The characters so rich, so alive, so real. You could taste the salty air of the Caribbean and feel the breeze of the ocean upon your skin. You loved fiercely and hated passionately. You raged in anger, you clenched in terror, you gasped in horror. But in the end, you wept with relief. Not because everything was "magically" okay...no...the beauty of J.C. Owens writing...the master and perfection of the storytelling...this is what made you weep. Yes, Kirith was broken. Yes, Landon rescued him just as Kirith had done for him earlier in the story. But, no, things were not perfect...but there was hope...and there was love--such love.

I highly recommend Taken by J.C. Owens. This author just gets better and better...stunning really. A master storyteller, an incredible book.

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### **Beck says**

This book is just AWESOME ... no ... that is too bland a word ... SPLENDIFEROUS, STUPENDOUS, both of those & more ... I was squeezed through an emotional wringer with this one ... dragged from adrenalin-pumping anxiety & excitement, to horror, compassion & heart-melting awww ... BTW ... I want a ferret.

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### **Rachel says**

Stupid. But it worked. Crime boss with a heart of gold (?) takes pretty boy lackey from rival criminals hostage. Actually, no, this was really stupid and I am not sure it worked. For some reason (embarrassingly enough) it did hold my attention, and gets to walk away with three stars for it.

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### **Betryal says**

Many emotions whipped through me while reading this books and series, bantering me all at once. The story is riveting, shocking, heartbreaking, intense and utterly sad.

Be emotionally read when tackling this story. I do recommend it as being one of the BEST books I've read and I await with bated breath to read many many more books by J.C.

Def a two thumbs and toes up!

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### **Sue says**

Oh Wow! This so exceeded my expectations.

Such a well-written book. The excitement holds throughout, the sex scenes are very well done. Also, frequent enough but not overwhelming the rest of the book. They're important to the plot, but far from its whole focus.

Now, the winner: the psychological aspect to the entire book. From Landon's upbringing, how he's captured by Kirith, and finally what happens to Kirith and his family and the way that's resolved. It all seems authentic, believable and very, very affecting. I couldn't stop reading until the end, I was so invested in the characters. I love when books do that to me; it's what I need to make a 5-star read.

I'd recommend this to anyone who liked Stockholm Syndrome, and anyone who likes suspense and thoughtful, psychological plots.

Oh, and anyone who wants to read a great couple, which is all of us, I suspect.

Now I just have to track down some more from this author, because I suspect she will be a favourite.

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