



# Want Me

*Rowan McBride*

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## **Want Me** Rowan McBride

Joel Beckett is blessed. He's popular with the ladies, a star on the football field, and worshiped by everyone on campus. Including Walker Cain.

Only Walker's worship has crossed the line, driving him to invoke ancient magic that binds them together in an inescapable downward spiral. Now reality is shifting, and with each new life Joel is forced to watch Walker steal away another of the blessings he'd always taken for granted.

It's never enough. Cursed blood runs hot, and with every turn of the spiral, Walker breathes the seductive words that Joel can't resist. The words that could drag them both into hell.

"Want me."

## **Want Me Details**

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Author : Rowan McBride

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# From Reader Review Want Me for online ebook

## \* Endless says

This was one of the worst kinds of violation and stockholm syndromes I have ever read.

Pile of BS #1 - "Because your world revolves around me, and since you've raped me so many times and I've gotten off, so...I'll fall for you too..."

Pile of BS #2 - "Because I felt like an uncomfortable yet proud giant at 6'6", I don't mind being a skinny 5'4" geeky tiny little guy"

Pile of BS #3 - "I'd rather give up my one true passion of football and write beautiful poems, than be a star football player"

[*What's wrong with doing both?*]

Pile of BS #4 - "You've robbed me of my life and completely forced me to live like someone else entirely, but I still love you for it, 'cos you know, your life completely revolves around me 'n all, so what more could i ask for."

Pile of BS #5 - "Because only at the height of 5'4" can i possess the intelligence of doing well in english literature otherwise I'm only a dumb football stud at the *giant* height of 6'6" !!!"

Pile of BS #6 - "At the height of 6'6" I'm an ass to my family or because I'm a big guy my family can't love me enough or we can't be close enough all because I'm a big guy my family doesn't need to care about me 'cos I take care of myself against the big bad world. I can't be smothered in familial love until 'n unless I'm a scrawny little dude who needs extra protection."

At the end of reading this book I couldn't help but be judgemental towards the author's mindset. I'm wondering whether this was like the author's vendetta against a stud who may have jilted "xe"m in the past...Am I being rude...perhaps...

But had the ending been something like both the guys going back to their "original" physiques, maybe the story would've been redeemable for me 'cos I remember Joel liking Walker in his actual form of skinny little fellow with dark beautiful skin. Plus he was friendly enough towards the red-head April that it could've blossomed into a good friendship regardless of his height...

There is so much wrong going on here, this book has so many holes that I'm actually rather peeved at some of the justifications the author tried to throw at me as a reader at the conclusion of this unbelievable charade. And when I say unbelievable - it's not the magic part at all, but the attraction and love and chemistry between the MCs which felt like the stuff of well...dreams...vindictive dreams. It just doesn't gel. People might want to argue that i feel like this because of society's preconceived notions and stereotypes - But, no. This has everything to do with my innate sense of right and wrong. And this was very very wrong.

I've read some beautiful fantasy/magic M/M and thought I'd give this one a go. But boy, was I in for some major disappointment!

:(

p.s. @Kynthosyuat: I know how it feels when you're super excited about a book and rec it to a friend and they feel the exact opposite. I'm sorry, this one was a miss for me.

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### **Ayanna says**

A very interesting read. The ideas McBride invokes here are intriguing and I rather liked the way she delved into the darker sides of human nature. The way she handled the development of the characters was rather good.

~~The ending—especially the prologue—was just a little corny for my tastes, though (hence, the 4 stars), but other than that, it's a good read.~~(ETA: Now that I've sat and thought of it more, it's not that bad. I'm still a little disturbed by this whole "It's GREAT!" thing because it seems a bit Stockholm-y, but, I mean, he could just be making the best out of a bad-ish situation? And I guess it *is* a lot better in comparison? And the ending poem really is beautiful.)

(view spoiler)

Reread ETA:

There are some things that are a little weird, such as Joel's delicacy (I mean, come on. Small children are small and they're not all wispy and delicate) but I suppose that can be chalked up to a sort of essence transference thing, so w/e.

Walker's character, once I get over the initial shock, actually is quite ingeniously written. Taking into account his past and upbringing, everything is what it probably ought to be. His story and the way it's told is really rather heart-rending.

Bravo for that, I'd say.

Although, as with all of McBride's books, it seems, I really do hope xe's way exaggerating on some of the size comparisons.

Some of them are rather worrying.

(view spoiler)

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### **Serena Yates says**

This is a totally amazing book. Creepy, scary and weird describe it just as much as thought-provoking and sweet. I spent about the first third of the book trying to figure out what was going on - and deciding whether I liked the idea behind this book. I must admit that some of the non-consensual aspects repulsed me to the point where I WANTED to put it down - only I couldn't. It was as if the writing wove a spell around me which forced me to watch the train wreck happen.

The concept, as much as the quality of the writing, was what convinced me to stick with it. I was also desperate to see how this would end. Was there ANY hope for Joel and Walker? The two main characters are both in need of some serious growing up and learning and this self-made challenge certainly gave them that opportunity.

I won't give away any details, but I will say that it's a book well worth picking up. As scary and weird as it is touching and beautiful, this is a story about self-image and identity everyone can learn something from. If you like books that challenge your thinking, if you enjoy stories that might scare you more than a little, and if you're looking for something very creative and unusual, you will probably like this book as much as I did.

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## **Vivian says**

Interesting premise with some heavy Old Testament theology.

The beginning was very dark magicky and then swerves heavily towards theology which works out well enough. But, honestly, the last shift in the story never quite gets the problem tidied up, or rather it takes a leap of faith I don't have. Leap of faith--yeah, may be intentional or not, but I thought the ending was a bit convenient.

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## **Kynthos-the-Archer (Kyn) says**

This one is going on my dog-eared-fav/reread shelf. My very own personal hall of fame. *\*laughs\** Yes, this one is a **straight 5 stars** for me because it's the best book I've ever read todate for 2013.

This book has surpassed all my expectations and I was pleasantly surprised by its depth and substance too. I have never thought there would be a day that I would label an erotic romance novel as profound.

Many may have just deduced this book as one of those mainstream everyday fantasy erotica books with the usual similar themes and plots. I mean who would have guessed that behind such a cover, suggestive title and blurb, was a story that would lead you through a series of self-discoveries, opens the eyes of the readers to see beyond skin deep and beyond oneself.

### **The Main Characters**

The story was told from the protagonist, Joel's point-of-view. Joel was a football star at his campus and every sense a jock. He was built like Mr. Universe at Six-six just over three hundred pounds of hard, cut muscle and has good looks to complete the whole package too. Although he isn't really a bad guy, he is an extreme narcissist who thinks that the world revolves around him and he could have anything he wants without even trying for it. To him, he's a god.

**[“*He looks at me the way everybody looks at me.*” I let my head drop back against the tree trunk and stared up at the Colorado sky. “*I’m a god.*”]**

**[Wasn’t sure why. All the girls on campus wanted me. Lots of the guys too. Even Walker,**

**if you could believe Sam. I could fuck anyone I wanted, really. Who wouldn't want to be me?]**

On the other hand, Joel's roommate, Walker was exactly the polar opposite of him. He is only five-four, skinny like a bag of bones and a geek to boot. A creepy one too. Everyone seems to think so. Joel's jock-buddy Sam, had even warned him about Walker and stated that he might be gay and have hots for Joel which Joel had waived it off as the usual *everyone-wants-me-what's-the-big-deal*.

It was too late for regrets when Walker had made an unforgiving irreversible spell to compel Joel to his every wish forcing him to lose his self-autonomy and later his very sense of self too. Walker had effectively bound Joel to him all just because he desires Joel. He did this even knowing full well that Joel is not gay and was not even the least bit attracted to him. He just wanted Joel and wants Joel to want him. That's his ultimate goal and sole focus in life.

Walker was no ordinary human but a cursed one marked by God due to his ancestor's wrongdoing tainting the Cain's bloodline. Cain as in the biblical Cain, the man who committed the first homicide upon his very own brother, Abel. Walker's cursed bloodline comes with some perks it seems. He is able to invoke spells and has knowledge of runes and potions making. I guess that makes him some sort of a wizard.

Since all Cains are already doomed to end up in hell due the curse, Walker took on an indifference outlook in life. His nonchalance callous treatment of Joel especially in the beginning was nothing but cruel and vicious. Making him even creepier than he already was and making me cringed each time he carelessly dismissed Joel's pitiful pleadings and reasoning.

It is painful even for me as a reader to watch from the sideline, their continuing spiral to destruction. And it rips me apart seeing how Joel would struggled on relentlessly with shred of his remaining dignity trying hard to make the most of it only to have it torn away by Walker each time.

**[As I walked out of the building, I thought about the lady in the poem. She was happy and free and fun; then the fucking duke kills her, and all that's left is her portrait. The only time she gets to smile is when *he* pulls back the curtain, and she's forced to smile at *him*.**

**I didn't get that A because I was inspired. I got that A because Walker had taught me exactly how she felt. - (Joel was referring to Robert Browning's My Last Duchess poem)]**

**[*Fucking Walker.***

***I pushed forward, determined to force a few more laps out of my tired legs.***

***This was my life now. I'd work hard. I'd find a way to make it my own. Hopefully, by the grace of God, no one would take it from me. My jaw clenched, and I ran harder, ran away from the truth I knew was chasing me.]***

## The Writing, Plot and Characterization

The main event happens right at the beginning of the book and I was helplessly sucked into its vortex unable to peel myself away even when I felt like I am drowning in Joel's pain and angst and my heart hurts like hell. Ms McBride just kept twisting her keen knife away regardless of my anguished cries matching those of Joel's. Such exquisite pain (that's the masochistic side of me speaking).

I find the plot and characters in this book simply amazing. I could even feel some sort of empathy towards Walker towards the end. And I adore Joel's best friend, April she's such a fun person to be around and a very loyal friend.

And of course needless to say, I adore Joel and vouch for him throughout the story. He is a very strong and intelligent person. He keeps getting up again and again no matter how many times he falls into that damnable spiral created by Walker. (view spoiler) And he certainly was not complacently forgiving towards Walker as others had claimed him to be. He fought Walker every step of the way and used every ounce of his remaining will to reject Walker's compulsion spell on him.

***["Do you have any idea what you do to me? It fucking hurts to look at you, Walker. I lay eyes on you, and there's rage and fear and knee-buckling lust. I couldn't even run away tonight! I had to run to you!"]***

**["You are my lover."]**

**"No, Walker! Lovers love each other, you sick bastard!" The shaking spread to my whole body.**

**"You take my will, my emotions, away from me and expect me to..." I stared down at my wrist. "I don't even know who I am anymore. I should at least have that, shouldn't I? If I don't, then what's the point?"]**

Since Joel is really a good man at heart, it would not be realistic for him to want to end Walker's life when he sleeps just because of the bitterness and anger he felt towards the unfairness he had suffered. Joel does have a bleeding heart... he had even tried to understand Walker and his motivation behind all the lies and manipulation enough to empathize with him and to guide him to the right path.

Through Walker, Joel got to learn so much about his own self and how he was once so self-absorbed due to his off-the-chart narcissistic nature that he couldn't find a single thing he could be grateful or feel thankful for.

Back then, he was effectively blind to everything else in life save for himself. He just couldn't see pass anything other than how great he is and how others should be glad to be honoured by his very presence. In a way, the old him has a very narrow perspective hence the shallowness that sometimes would leave him feeling restless and easily bored.

That's why Walker calls him a narcissist fuq. Lol.

[*"You got off on people getting off on you."* I nodded.

*"What turned you on most was your own body."* Again I nodded. God, it hurt to hear him say it. He might not have been bothered by it, but to have my attitude—my own self-absorption—spelled out so clearly was a harsh mirror to face.]

As for Walker, although he holds Joel's reins in every sense... Joel holds his heart and mind. (view spoiler)  
He really can be very sweet to Joel although he lacks empathy and respect for others.

[*"You're crazy,"* I whispered. (Joel)

*"For you,"* he whispered back. (Walker)

My fingers raked over his skin. *"Obsessed."* (Joel)

*"Devoted."* (Walker)]

[Walker carefully laid himself on top of me. *"I want you. Every life. That'll never change."*]

[*"Seeing you cry would be like a preview. Couldn't stand that."*

I tilted my head to the side. *"A preview of what?"*

Again he looked at me as if I should have known. *"Of hell."*]

[My eyes rounded. *"That's how you're defining right and wrong? By what makes me happy?"* Pride lit his face as he nodded.

Oh Jesus. *"Walker, you can't do that."*

*"Why not?"*

*"Because I shouldn't be the center of your life!"*

His voice was gentle, a little confused. *"But you are."* ]



***["You're crazy. And vicious when there's no one around to rein you in." My hand slid down my shin, curved around my ankle. "But in a bizarre way, you're also innocent. Cute. Even sweet when you've got it in your head that you'll do anything for me. You're changing, learning, and that's good." I lifted my head. "Very good."]***

I couldn't begin to fathom Walker's twisted ideal of love. His level of devotion and fixation towards Joel was out of this world; even Joel felt breathless and caught whenever Walker would verbally declare his love. I could only tell you that it all begun with just a small gesture of kindness shown by an unwary Joel when they both first met.

Love can sometimes be too suffocating and overwhelming especially when one is clueless on the proper way of channeling it to the other party.

*Can you love too much?*

### **Conclusion**

I must say this again... it is so rare for a M/M erotica romance book to have so much depth. Capable of making you ponder so much, to learn and reflect upon our own life.

.....love, respect, devotion, trust, courage, hope, choices, sacrifice and redemption.

Yes, I would definitely recommend this book to everyone despite that it is still a pretty dark and creepy story especially in the beginning and also a non-cons all the way involving a straight guy. I just hope that others would be inspired by the messages within it and would make more correct choices in life.

Lastly, I must add that the story does have creepy elements similar to the famous TV show, **Twilight Zone** and also quite **Stephen King-ish**. ;-)

That's why many readers kept mentioning that it IS creepy. Lol.

Anyhow, I also find it very romantic in its own twisted way. (view spoiler)

On a different note, here's something from the book that had caught my attention as well as surprise me in a good way. Nothing to do with creepy kay:

Joel's best friend April was talking to him about the Original sin, self curse and redemption:-

***["April," I began carefully, not knowing whether I was right, "do you believe that God curses people?"***

***She closed my notebook and set it on the table beside her. "Nope," she said, as if this were any other conversation. "I think God's too cool for that. Why do you ask?"***

***Because, despite what I'd said to Walker, I had my own set of doubts. "You don't think***

**God would curse a man and his entire bloodline? What about original sin?"**

**"I don't believe in a vengeful, grudge-holding God. I do believe that sometimes a person can do something so horrible that they curse *themselves*, though."**

**My brow furrowed. "Curse themselves?"**

**"Sure. Look at original sin. *We* broke the rules. *We* ate the fruit. *We* got ourselves booted out of paradise. Some of the things we do put a mark right on our soul, and it's not always so easy to get rid of it." She rested her elbows on her knees. "But God's been giving us ways to clean it off from the moment we got ourselves cast out, going so far as to sacrifice his own son. Because he loves us. That's the God I believe in."]**

I am ever so glad that Ms. McBride decided to write that **Epilogue** which was initially not in the book before her beta readers goes through it. Thank you for wrapping it all up nicely.

Ms. McBride, I am in total agreement with you on the reasons why you decided to take that unconventional ending in your 2008 epilogue rather than a go-with-the-crowd ending for both of them. It makes more sense and it has strengthened the story and the message behind it too. If it was to take that alternate ending in that 'bonus epilogue', I wouldn't be so sure of it anymore. It would somehow dilute the impact of this book. I mean what's the purpose of returning to point A again? (view spoiler)

Yes, that 2008 epilogue is canon!

(view spoiler)

\*\*\*\*\*

P/S: Just wanted to add that this book reminds me of another brilliant piece of work by Rowan McBride. It is still a WIP (work-in-progress) online original fiction. One that I adore till todate and would die to see it completed someday soon *\*hint, hint\**:

### **The Jascian's Toy by Rowan McBride**

The two main characters in TJT echo Joel & Walker's personalities.

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**Nina says**

It seems like in the last few days I've kept sending people who read my reviews to other people's reviews - it

looks like I'm about to do it one more time. I'm very sorry! I'm going through a bit of a weird time: I'm with family back in Romania; a grandfather who I've only seen once a year for all my life died a few months ago; consequently my grandmother is depressed and the whole clan is pretty much going crazy. So basically I'm exhausted and exasperated and this afternoon I just up and decided to shut myself in my room and read the whole fucking book. Yes; I'm that selfish.

Also; I haven't gone crazy. My grammar is as good as it ever was; but I'm forced to use semicolons instead of commas because on my uncle's half-brother's laptop the comma key is missing. No; it's not that I can't find it. Somehow it has simply been removed. There's a hole. I cannot for the life of me figure out how that could have happened; but my little cousin must have had something to do with it.

Despite all this; I am going to gift you with my (brief) opinion of this book: it's an entertaining; engrossing and well-written book that made me think about redemption; forgiveness and love in unusual circumstances. Each character's emotional and psychological progress was gradual and natural and all the small revelations dropped throughout the novel kept me on the edge of my seat and alternating between biting my nails; wanting to cry and grinning like a fool. One other big merit is that it halfway managed to pick me up from a horrid (I figure stress-related) reading slump after I read forty pages of about half the books on my ereader for three days without finding anything that could hold my interest. Is this enough? Please let this be enough. There are a ton of reviewers out there who have written in depth and actually useful reviews that are not a rant on private life - go find those.

Writing in English is a bit difficult with an eight-year-old screaming in my ears about zookeepers and helicopters (?); but I'm sure you'll forgive me if this doesn't make much sense.

Try this and this.

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### **Anna (Bananas!) says**

Wonderfully unique, never boring, plus believable and touching character development - this book is worth your time.

#### **\*SPOILERS\***

I'd have liked a slightly different ending. A true sacrifice would have had more impact and possibly taken this to five stars. To see how far Joel would go for Walker, that would be more affecting. As it is, I like the ending. I like the epilogues. They're not necessary but they don't detract from the story, and if it had ended before the epilogues I would have felt frustrated. After all that build-up I needed to see them happy together. Also, you're not fooling me, author. That April is an angel of one kind or another. I love her almost more than Walker and Joel.

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### **Steelwhisper says**

This read like an m/m version of a certain Stephen King novella: so good!

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## Emma Sea says

Lisa already covered much of what I'd say.

I want to give this story a 5 just for being interesting and putting an original spin on m/m, but it's not there yet. (Also, not in itself completely original: McBride pays homage to some classic 1950s and 1960s science fiction/horror fiction stories.) At the same time I thought the author lost hold of the story about halfway through, and it started to lose focus. I think that's because there's a disconnect between where the story should have gone, and the demands for an HEA that readers' expectations would impose on the plot. McBride should have made it longer, and better.

Personally, I'd suggest skipping both the new HEA ending, and the alternate ending. Either end is not up to the level of the rest of the story. Here's where an author does themselves a disfavor by listening to people who want a completely Disneyfied HEA, when this is totally out of step with the rest of the book.

Still, saying that, this is highly enjoyable, creative, and the first half had me competely enraptured. It was actually that glorious state of being slightly un-immersed in a book enough to be able to appreciate, while reading, how lucky you are to have found something you're enjoying this much. Yum.

3.75 rounded up.

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## Elisa Rolle says

Rowan McBride has a series of stories about the "growing muscle" event: one or both main characters change their looks to suit the taste of their beloved.

Joel is the perfect guy: six foot six of football player, he is not the usual jock, he has also a thinking brain. But he is too used to be adored by everyone, he can have all the girls he wants and all the friends he likes. At 19 yd he is the raising star of his college.

But everyone around him continue to warn him against his college roommate, Walker Cain, a creepy geek, always with a book in hand and that everyone seems to avoid. Walker is a skinny guy, five foot four, all bones and big eyes. But he has a costant perfume around him that appeals a lot to Joel, and told be truth, Joel likes to be around Walker. Obviously not in a sexual way, Joel has never had a second though on Walker in that way, but still he is comfortable around him.

Walker is cursed. He is the last descendent of the biblical Cain, and he now belong to a long line of wizard. All the Cain has the chance to cast a big spell in their life and Walker chooses to use it to bond Joel to him forever: through the bond he can make Joel doing everything he wants, and he forces Joel to have sex with him. Everytime Joel reaches a climax, he passes to Walker some of his strenght and physical appearence.

Both Walker and Joel think that the spell will stop when both of what Joel was will be pass to Walker, but they are wrong. And things seem to spiral down to a unthinkable end.

Joel is a character in travel: during the book he will experiment many lifes and different perspective and he will learn to deal with them. You can think that Joel is a victim, but truly he "needs" this experience to see

the world in the right perspective. All the things he gives granted to his physical strength, could be not so granted if you are weaker, but you can also learn that your attitude can represent you more than your look.

Walker is a sociopathic, no doubt in that. And he is also very selfish and without regrets. Even when he could see all the wrong things he has done, still he is not repentant: maybe, he says, he would do something different, but still he would cast the spell to bond Joel. Cause he wants Joel. Walker is not a good person: I think he can play the role of a good person if he has by his side Joel, but left alone, he can be a lethal weapon. He has not conscience by himself, his conscience and his good behaviour are given by Joel.

For this reason, the bond between Joel and Walker is almost a sickly one. But it is also a very powerful and enthralling one. *Want Me* is a very original and powerful book, a pretty long story which will take you bond to the book till the last page.

<http://www.amazon.com/dp/1587369346/?...>

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## **Lisa Henry says**

### **3.75 stars**

The first word that comes to mind: **creepy**.

So, Joel is a jock. He's big, really big -- the size thing actually confused me enough to think about getting out a tape measure so I could translate all those feet and inches to centimetres -- and the star of the football team. He shares a room with Walker, who is a scrawny, short, unpopular nerd. Turns out he's also magic, but we'll get to that. Joel isn't a typical asshole jock. He's actually nice to Walker, and likes him. Turns out that's a mistake because Walker (who is magic, remember?) unleashes a spell that makes Joel want him.

The spell catches both boys in a spiral. And every time Walker uses the spell, they wake up in an altered reality. Joel is getting smaller and weaker, and Walker is getting bigger and stronger. And pretty soon Joel is tiny, and Walker is like a giant.

I think that's why I dropped it a star -- the size difference thing doesn't really do it for me. By the time Joel is so small that he can't reach door knobs and (view spoiler), I was finding the whole thing less delicious-creepy and more totally repulsive-creepy. By this stage, I had lost any sympathy I'd had for Walker in the beginning, and any personal growth (LOL!) he experienced was too little, too late.

Having said that, Joel was a great character. Although I agreed with Walker in one respect -- he was way too forgiving. Walker didn't need redemption so much as he needed to be stabbed in his sleep. I never bought the whole tortured-soul-needs-redemption thing. No, Walker's tortured soul needed a slapping.

So that's the negative. The positive? The writing here is beautiful, the creepy atmosphere is pervasive, and it's really, really well written. Every turn of the spiral kept me doubting the possibility of a decent resolution for our MCs, and kept me reading until way past my bedtime. And that's the mark of a good book.

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## Silkeeeeereads says

Every review I read about this book seemed like the reader was, oh, I don't know, confused maybe? I decided I would read it for myself. It is a very different read. This is my opinion so don't write it in stone but I think it's dark erotica with a HFN ending and then an added HEA epilogue. It's unlike anything I have read. A bit of the paranormal, a bit of the fluff of someone SO in love, a lot of depression as the character, Joel, works through the problems and finally acceptance and forgiveness.

I think most MM readers that are looking for fluff will not like this book. The dark erotic readers like myself will understand it a bit more and maybe, because it's so different, like it. The paranormal readers, they probably will enjoy this book. There's a little something for everyone, if you keep an open mind.

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## Smith Barney says

[  
*"You want me, don't you?"*  
*Dark swirls of pleasure coiled around my dick, spun into my body. My head fell back against the doorjamb as I groaned. That spellbinding, all-consuming pattern bound us t*

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## Loederkoningin says

"It's very...unique." There seems to be some consensus among those who have read *Want Me*. And I wholeheartedly agree. This book IS unique. It's also crazily weird, hilarious, creepy, and, as the story unfolds, an intense psychological experiment that may bring tears to your eyes.

So what on earth should you expect?

Firstly, meet jock "I am God" Joel. You know the type. He's the star of the football team. He indulges in his own muscle-mass and his height alone is his free ticket into the pants of all the pretty ladies. There's, basically, really no need for him to bother with things like trying to be witty, understanding or just brainy in general. Everyone either wants to be Joel, or wants to be with Joel.

Which is also why his roommate Walker's lustful, secret glances hardly register with him. It's only to be expected of the scrawny, freaky kid, right? What Joel doesn't know, is that his geeky roommate is not only completely and obsessively in love with him, he has as a trick up his sleeve as well. Or actually; a spell. One that makes Joel want him. Regardless of the fact that Joel's straight. And regardless of potential serious side effects to the spell. For instance, maybe it will throw both guys into an inescapable downward spiral, in which one alternate reality is swapped for an even more extreme one. It's hardly a spoiler that all goes terribly wrong. The spell creates some kind of transference between them and allows Walker to - unwillingly? - parasite on Joel, every time they have spell-invoked sex.

*"Bastard!" I struggled against him, and his arms barely flexed as he kept my wrists in place. "You're getting off on this. Watching me get smaller, lose my life, bit by bit. And all the time, you suck it all inside you!"*

While Walker seems to revel in his new powerful body, Joel weakens and shrinks. No longer the biggest shark in the sea, life now dares to sucker punch him. His enemies crawl out of their hiding places and his former conquests now fuck his friends. Surprisingly enough, Joel turns out to be more resilient than you'd expect of a self-centered prick. It's touching to read how he desperately tries to adapt and cling onto shreds and pieces of happiness. At the same time, Walker's ambition never wavers. He wants Joel, unconditionally. And seemingly despite the consequences.

*"I'm my own man." A low, husky chuckle swirled around me. "No, you're not. You're mine." My eyes snapped open, and I glanced up, trembling so hard that my teeth chattered. "W-Walker."*

*"You're so strong, Joel. This spell is more potent every time I invoke it. I can feel the power growing inside me." he smiled as he walked closer. "Yet here you are, sitting out in the freezing cold, resisting."*

*"Stay away from me."*

*"I can't." He straddled the bench beside me, then grasped my knees to turn my body and hook my legs over his thighs. "You should know that by now."*

But ultimately, as the downward spiral mercilessly spurs them on, their lives are at stake. How can they break the spell? What has redemption to do with anything? And will Joel ever be his own man again? Or will he cease to exist altogether....

Think you've read it all by now? Do you crave something different, a creative, slightly creepy read perhaps? Then you might want to give *Want Me* a go! After a somewhat bumpy start - I personally didn't know whether I should let the crazy wash over me and just have fun or be disturbed by the scary concept - the book captivated me around the 1/3 mark. Rowan McBride is a true storyteller: the prose is effective rather than beautiful, making *Want Me* a fast read. I must admit that I had braced myself for horror. No wonder, with a blurb like this! But although the atmosphere was plenty creepy, this book was a lot less dark than I had anticipated. For example, McBride glosses over the more appalling aspects of the growing and shrinking process (the sex folks! I've never been this relieved about sex scenes fading to black!). Instead, *Want Me* may leave you pondering about the impact of the cards you're dealt in life, and the choices you make based on them.

Finally, a note for the HEA lovers out there: the revised version of *Want Me* was published only last month. It includes not only an extra chapter, but a bonus in the form of an alternative HEA ending (McBride really is into alternatives, be it lives or endings, ha!). The original version didn't come with a HEA ending. I would've been perfectly fine with it staying that way, since I think it contrasts with the story as a whole. However, McBride's beta readers got their sweet, sweet way. So this revised version now has two(!) HEA's to choose from.

I told you not to let the book's dark appearance scare you away!;)

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## Yblees says

Side note: There's a free fic by this author on Smashwords called "Chains". Smutty but nice.

On to the review:

Yes, this is good. One of those rare books that is so amazingly written, when you get to the end, you'll want

to read it again, just to make sure.

I'm writing this review after my 2nd read, and it definitely still deserves those 5 stars. Brilliantly written, with great emotional depth and a subtly complex plot. All packed into a tightly wound structure which mirrors the major theme of the book.

The first time round, was a very emotional read for me. I was in tears at least every other chapter. The second time was a very analytical experience. A test of the reasoning and logic behind every "shift". And I have to say, everything holds together extremely well.

Joel's place in his world requires him to be within a certain physical range, and as he loses his place through successive shifts, his dreams and motivations change in realistic and pragmatic ways. Walker's goal, on the other hand, is specific and unchanging - but more complex than it originally appears. The way the story progressed reminded me very much of iterative computer modelling, where starting values changed subtly with each iteration. Interestingly, using a faulty model, or the wrong starting values, can cause a model to spiral out of control - diverging from the ideal solution, instead of getting closer. In other words, Joel's resolution for that final shift was instrumental to achieving that "Best Ending" situation. Right at the end, the author proves conclusively that Joel's not just a victim along for the ride - and for me, that alone deserved the fifth star of my 5 star rating.

Oh, and I'm talking about the canon ending here. We'll just ignore the "other" one.

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