



## Within the Realm

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Revised Cover for ISBN 9781940174006

He buried his father seven years earlier. As Rainer Lawson comes of age, he is set to join the ranks of Elite Iodex, the fiercest law enforcement organization in the Gifted Realm. Rainer will not allow his father's assassination to have been in vain.

Emily Haydeshire has been the love of his life since childhood, and he wants nothing more than to start their life together. Heady desire consumes them both, but this raw sexual need could blind them to the dangers that surround them.

As they allow their voracious passions to consume them, evil seems to lurk around every darkened corner. The Interfeci criminal organization is desperate to regain power. Iodex is set to use their extraordinary powers to harness and control the energies of the Earth in order to keep the Interfeci at bay. Will Rainer's determination be enough to protect his family and the love of his life Within the Realm?

## Within the Realm Details

Date : Published June 28th 2013 by Realm Press (first published June 25th 2013)

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Author : Jillian Neal

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Genre : Fantasy, Paranormal, Romance, New Adult, Paranormal Romance

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# From Reader Review Within the Realm for online ebook

## Elaine White says

\*\* I WAS GIVEN THIS BOOK, BY THE AUTHOR, IN RETURN FOR AN HONEST REVIEW \*\*

Author – Jillian Neal

Star rating – ★★★??

Plot – Missing. I don't get the point of the book, unless it's all about the sex.

Characters – females are one dimensional and males are a little more broad spectrum.

Movie Potential – ★★★?? (unless the sex is removed, then it goes up one star)

Ease of reading – okay. Simple words used, but too much flowery description that is distracting.

Cover – ✓

Suitable Title – No.

Would I read it again – No.

~

### Book Analysis:

This book did nothing for me, to be honest. There was so much that I didn't like that had I not been reviewing this for a blog tour, I would never have finished it.

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### Pros:

When I began reading this story I was excited, hopeful and I really enjoyed the first 10%. I chose to review the whole series because I read Wendy Owens' Guardian Series last year and it blew me away. It was an excellent series and this 'Gifted Real' series sounded similar. I had high expectations when I started and unfortunately, the book didn't live up to them.

The story had a great start with an epilogue that introduced us to the main characters: Logan, his sister Emily, and Rainer. Rainer is Logan's best friend, but he's also Emily's boyfriend. We get told this really early on. The first chapter then goes to years later when the kids are twenty.

The first few chapters are great. I thought it was really clever of the author to give us a history of this unfamiliar world and an explanation of how it worked through an exam that Rainer had to take. However, it was very difficult to follow because so many terms were being thrown at us, as a reader, and we were expected to understand what they meant with no explanation, sometimes, so this was a very half and half situation. Sometimes things were really well explained and some things you were left to work out on your own, which wasn't so clever.

I'll admit, that from the very first page I didn't take to Emily. It began as me being undecided about her character and then progressively moved towards real hate. I'll explain why later. As for Logan and Raider; I love them. They're awesome and normal – for the first few chapters! I also really like Adeline, who is Logan's girlfriend. She's perhaps the most real character in the book.

I really like Logan and Adeline as characters and in their relationship. I like the overall story – or attempt at one – and the funny/awkward parts. I do giggle and cringe quite a lot when Logan and Rainer are together. They are what pulls this story up to a 3 star for me. But I'm still missing plot!

I like the way the book ended. At the end of the first book in series I always read 'End of Book 1', but this say 'Just the Beginning'. Though I'm disappointed that it took 50% of the book for it to even start, this is a good way to move into the next one.

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Cons:

The premise of the characters all being 'Gifted' with magical abilities and separate from the 'non-Gifted' world was, I'll admit, original. Until it went NOWHERE! Literally, we get introduced to this amazing world and then it all turns out to be a back story for Rainer and Emily's romance. Let me tell you in advance that I gagged a few times because of that.

There's a really awkward 'talk' between Rainer and Logan as they discuss sex and their girlfriends, early on in the book. At first I thought this was really funny, brilliantly done cring-worthy stuff. I literally giggled out loud, but then I realised that this realistic scene of two guys discussing this subject was going to be the real main story throughout. Yawn! And that brings me back to the characters supposedly being twenty...no! These kids barely act sixteen. I think this book was originally a YA about teens and then the author thought – Hell no, let's add a gross, obscene amount of descriptive sex!. And...she did! And this is where all my problems start.

Rainer has an uncle Stan and when he visits him early on, he has this really weird Spanish 'friend' who seems more like a loanshark. However, this moment gave me a really bad feeling – like these two would cause real trouble for Rainer later. Um...nope. The next 20% of the book was about him getting his freak on. Literally.

I expected this book, from the covers to the descriptions on Goodreads and Amazon to be a YA series for teens. Well, that opinion was thrown out the window when the obscenely desperate Rainer and Emily began rubbing and grinding all over each other every second they could get. I'm not kidding either. It was like the entire story was thrown out the window in favour of seriously explicit sex scenes. Well, if you want to write an erotica go ahead, but at least bill it as an erotica. And, even worse, the sex scenes were NOT good!

We get a small injection of relief with a challenge everyone talks about, but the author never explains. We're just expected to know, all through the first 20% of the book that 'the Angels' are a team of some sort, without being told which sport it is. Then we get to 'Coulomb's Web' the last game Emily has to play before graduation. Apparently she hates it with a passion and is no good at it, but, surprise surprise, \*spoiler alert\* their team wins with no problem. Urgh! That is something I said a lot while reading this book. It's unbelievable and single-minded. The game description, when it finally came was very complicated and I barely understood most of it. It would have been nice to have a comparison to a game or idea that we readers would already understand.

I'm also not a fan of the repetitive words – 'issued' being used to describe movement? And people 'panted', 'stunned' or 'hushed' their words? Really? REALLY? There is a heck of a lot of panting going on throughout the first 30% of this book it's unreal. And, FWI, people don't inhale food! If that's a thing with these 'Gifted' characters then that should have been pointed out by now. Normal human beings EAT food.

Let me just admit that by 20% of this book, the whole 'sex' issue was really getting old. If they were rubbing, grinding or talking about the sex then Emily's thrusting her breasts into Rainer's face. And I'm not exaggerating; that line is used many, many times. The book began well, with a good story and potential to be great. Then it became all about Rainer and Emily doing the nasty. And trust me, it's nasty. I feel like the whole lot of them are horny pre-teens with nothing better to think about. I see glimmers of real character in Rainer and Logan, but not in any of the females. I feel like I'm missing the real point of the story.

To be blunt, I would have cut almost all of this trash out of the book and I could still get the basic storyline, without all the rampant, unnecessary, single-minded focus on sex. I'm really also not happy that all the females are weak, slutty and sob all the time. All the men are typical bad boys and all the women do nothing but flirt, sleep around and cry. It's a gross injustice to the female sex. I feel sorry for any teen or pre-teen who reads this expecting a great YA story only to get full explicit sex shoved down their throat for 30% of the book and being told that it's okay.

Let's get back to the sex, shall we? Since we can't escape it let's evaluate it. Now, I've read a lot of novels with erotic/explicit and barely any sex. I write them too, but this one really takes the cake. It reads like an old 90s Mills and Boons with the description:

"Though he'd certainly done this much before, he began to consider his next moves."

This is about fingers going places I'm not allowed to talk about in a review. BUT, we've never been told this before. We get a flash back LATER that this has happened before, but no mention until now. The whole sex part of the story is gross, to be honest.

"Her energy flowed into him as he opened and ripened her rhythmically."

Seriously, I almost gagged just typing that out. Think what I felt reading it. Then there's this constant, incessant frustrating MILLION times that Rainer asks Emily if she's sure and everyone goes on and on and on about how much this will hurt her. GROSS and annoying! We get that he's nervous and this is supposed to be a 'big deal' to the Gifted, but how many times do we have to hear it?

Then there's trash like this –

"he broke through her until he could fill her with all of him." That sounds painful and gross. But, Emily's all delighted and absolutely fine with it. Ew.

"He placed his hand on her mound over the approximate place where he'd just broken through her." Please excuse me while I'm sick. I mean, this is unbelievable and disgusting to read. You have no idea the amount of times I gagged, squinted and tried not to keep reading this stuff. It gets worse, but I can't go into it now. I'm feeling sick as it is.

But let me saw one more thing about the sex – the first time all he goes is get inside her and blasts off (to keep it polite for the review). That's not sex! Yet she claimed it was magical and blah, blah, blah.

How am I supposed to believe they kids are twenty when they do stuff like this after sex –

""I really want to take care of you, Em, always." She swooned.

Tears formed on her lashes as she nodded. "Thank you." She fell back on her pillow. She hugged the one he'd slept on to her chest and inhaled deeply." Who swoons in this day and age? And don't get me started on this one –

"She could feel his every emotion because his release was inside of her." GROSS! Urgh!

I really don't understand Rainer and Emily's relationship. I don't believe it either. There's a constant invisible, unexplained power she has over him and we're told in the Prologue that she told him he was to be

her boyfriend when they were kids. Now, that seemed cute and all back when they were six or seven, but it feels like it's still that way. Emily tells Rainer what she wants and he gives it to her. It's not realisitc.

To be perfectly honest with you all, if I wasn't committed to reviewing this series it would have been a DNF the moment all the bumping and grinding started. That wasn't what I signed up for and the NEXT TWENTY PERCENT of horny teenagers doing nasty things in disgusting ways wasn't what I signed up for either. The sex isn't hot, necessary or relevant to the story. There's even a magical safe guard against pregnancy, so it's not as if it's a major story arc so that Emily turns out pregnant later. They've just told us it's impossible, so WHY? For the love of God, why?

Though the basic idea if good and I like the male characters, I can't take any more of this 'sex is the ENTIRE point of the story' plotline. And that's how it reads. If they're not thinking about it they're doing it. WHERE'S THE STORY?

The blurb mentions this – "Heady desire consumes them both, but this raw sexual need could blind them to the dangers that surround them. As they allow their voracious passions to consume them, evil seems to lurk around every darkened corner." But it never, for once, mentions explicit sex warnings or that the ENTIRE book is about sex. If it did say this, I would never have decided to read it, to be honest. I like my sex to come WITH a plot line, not instead of.

But, to be fair I committed to reading and reviewing this series and I'm darned well going to do it. I'm going to suffer every minute of it so that you don't have to.

Lots of flowery description that isn't necessary and distracts from the reading. I'm starting to see the plot coming through the story, but that's at the 50% mark. It should never take this long to see the plot and even then it's thin.

I have a REAL issue with these words being used so repetitively in the story: 'issued' is not a way to describe walking and NO-ONE 'inhales' their food. It sounds gross, painful and really disturbs my reading when it is mentioned so often. There are many alternative words to describe someone eating quickly. People also do not 'husked', 'sassed' or 'hemmed' their words. These are barely words as it is, never mind the correct term for someone talking. What is wrong with 'said'?

I did a lot of eye-rolling and gagging during this book; it feels like it was written by a teenager with no knowledge of sex or adults. And I'm including the sex scenes in here. They're not hot, not attractive, not sexy and neither are the characters.

And let me just ask you: does this sound sexy? "She hissed his name; it seared through him as a low guttural groan and escaped his lungs." It sounds like Parseltongue and it sounds painful. That is not sexy, bedroom talk. And let me just mention this one: "To pull the erotic energy from its main storehouse would be exquisite." I'm not even going to tell you what this was about because it made me gag so hard that I nearly choked myself.

And here – "The sunrise was reflecting off of the water." Was it? Because this is Rainer's POV and in the next sentence he opens his eyes, so how does he know? And saying 'heartbeats' in reference to one person, makes them sound like they have two hearts. Emily has one, so 'heartbeat' or 'beats of her heart' would have made more sense.

The writing style is very juvenile and reads as a first draft that no-one has edited. There is a lot of flowery and useless, unnecessary description. Simple things are being described with alternatives and using a heck of a lot of metaphors. The sex is cringe-worthy and makes me gag; it doesn't sound sexy, enjoyable or exciting.

In fact, it's pretty gross and makes me really uncomfortable. And believe me, I read a lot of erotica, so it's not the explicit part that bothers me, it's the way it's written. If the author can't describe the body parts and practices of sex properly, in her explicit scenes, then maybe they shouldn't be writing sex scenes just yet?

It would be nice if the memory scenes/flashbacks were in italics or something to separate them from the present time. It's very hard to tell where one ends and another begins.

What actually disappoints me the most is that this would make an awesome YA novel if you just removed the sex and hinted at what happened behind closed doors instead. The conversations, the characters personalities and twist of danger versus humour and love is excellent – for a YA novel. But the explicit sex (which is horrible anyway) would have to be removed. Then, in my opinion, this would be a 5 star YA novel. The story, once you weed it out between the sheets, is actually really good. But it shouldn't take 50% of the novel to get there. I could easily have chopped out about six chapters from this to make it an incredible, unputdownable, YA novel.

The use of 'spastically' and 'spaz' are really not okay with me. It doesn't fit the character and it's really offensive. I also hate the flippant way the author and character use the word. There are also a lot of instances where 'and' should really be 'an' and I'm not a fan of accents being written into books. I don't mind slang words, but when words are spelled to look like an accent it makes it really difficult to read, especially when you're not familiar with the accent.

I'm also confused as to whether the Angels are a sports group or a job sector. One minute they sound like a Quidditch team and the next they sound like Aurors. (I'm sorry for the Harry Potter analogy, but that's the only comparison I have.)

What happened to Rainer never having looked at or noticed other girls since he met Emily when they were little kids? It seems that every time I turn around he'd ogling some girl with a great 'rack'. He did it twice within this book; first with Chloe and secondly with Fionna.

And I have no clue, whatsoever, what this means 'He perked coffee, seated himself at the table, and waited determinedly.' How does one 'perk' coffee exactly? What does it even mean? I also don't think the author understands what the word 'diatribe' means or what negative connotations it has. She uses it multiple times to describe when someone goes into lecture mode. I suspect the word she's looking for is 'tangent' or 'monologue', 'lecture' or even 'speech'. Diatribe is not the right word to use in any of the places she has used it. There are also a few ?'s at the end of perfectly normal sentences, that suggest it's either a typo or the author isn't sure themselves about what they're writing. It feels sloppy.

And don't get me started on the multiple times that 'IN' has been used instead of 'ON'. Like this 'Everyone say in the living room floor'. Now, you can either sit in the living room or on the living room floor, but you can't sit in a floor.

I also have a feeling that Fergus' Gifted girlfriend will either be his saviour or really big trouble. I also don't like Fionna looks and acts around Rainer; it feels to me that she's flirting a heck of a lot, right in front of Emily. I also have a feeling that Emily will get pregnant from their bout of sex in the shower at her parents house, since no-one mentioned either of them doing a cast.

And, not for nothing, it says "Thank you for reading 'Rock Bottom'" at the end. Except that I didn't; this is book 1 and 'Rock Bottom' is book 4, so that's a mistake that needs fixed, unless I'm reading an Arc, which wasn't made clear at the time.

I also noticed that there's a discrepancy between the book covers. I didn't get a cover with my copy of Book 1, but book 2 says 'Book Two', while the third says 'Book 3'. This is minor, but it's important when broadcasting your series and it's a matter of continuity, which is a problem in this book so far, as well.

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Overall:

As you can see this book had more Cons than Pros. I think this book would be a 4-5 star favourite if it was written for a YA audience and the author had someone editing who knew about grammar. No offense to the author or the editor/publisher, but the whole thing read like a teenager attempting an adult novel. It just didn't work.

The characters are one-dimensional, with flashes of uniqueness that don't last long enough, and very stereotypical. The girls are sluts, the boys as bad-asses and the parents are overbearing, toothache sweet and overprotective. The only two things in this whole novel that I found believable or likeable were: 1. Logan and Rainer's friendship because they had a real bromance going on that was fun and real; and 2. Logan and Adeline's relationship because although they had sex, it was all about making her feel loved and sharing something special. It didn't turn into this gross out sex-fest and he isn't after it every second of the day like Rainer and Emily are.

The decent plot/story was let down grossly by the explicit sex, bad grammar and mistakes. I would have preferred this book had it undergone some intense editing; I mean, grammar, spelling and deleting a few chapters wroth of useless sex scenes. There's really no need for them, because they don't push the story along at all. I feel like they're only there to provide some heat and make the characters seem more adult, but it's a fail for me. The characters are juvenile, pathetic and barely read older than fifteen. The sex isn't good, enticing or sexy and the little romantic parts there were could easily have provided enough romance to keep a YA market happy.

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### **Corey Wisniewski says**

I received a copy of this book in exchange for my honest review.

Within the Realm was not quite what I was expecting. I expected the book to be a bit more action packed than it was. There was a lot I did not like about the book but there was a good amount I did like too. First let me say what I did not like. I personally thought the book was long and drawn out. The book is well written but it takes way too long to really get past the beginning kind of world building. I felt there was too much explanation about the characters and not a lot of explanation about the events that were happening. I felt the lead male Rainer was a bit too much on the weak side. I did not feel Rainer was a very strong male. He seemed to have many insecurities. The lead female Emily seemed a bit too insecure and wishy washy at times. I have to say I do like Alpha Males so I tend to like those lead males more so that could have been part of the problem. And as I said, I did not feel there was really any action in this book. There were events that happened but I did not really feel them like I do in some books I read.

Now what I did like about the book. I felt the writing was strong. There did not seem to be many if any mistakes. I felt the write knew how to describe her book and while it was way more descriptive than I like, it was described VERY well. You truly could picture everything she was writing about. I just felt there was too

much. Sometimes less is more. I felt the story had a nice flow to it. I was a bit bored since it was not as action packed as I like, but the author managed to make each word and sentence flow together so while I had a hard time following the book, I did get lost reading it trying to get to something that would grab me and not let go. I also felt as I got closer to the end of the book that this story was more of a coming of age story. I would not recommend the book to young people under probably 18 but I admit the story seemed to show the growth and coming of age of the lead and supporting characters. There were funny moments and heart felt moments. There were also moments when you wanted to cry and others where you wanted to scream. I have to say that while I would not read the book again, for someone who is looking for a book that is more heart felt and touching read, this is definitely for you.

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## **A. McCarty says**

Imaginative Dreams Review:

Having been brought to this author for an honest review, I have fell in love. This is one story that has pulled me in like never before. There were multiple times I had wished to be apart of the story because it is very easy to picture and wish you were with the gifted. I fell in love with the characters and wanted to read much more of their story.

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## **????????? says**

**4.5★★★★★**Within The Realm by Jillian Neal (The Gifted Realm Series book 1)

I was given this R2R in exchange for my honest opinion.

This was not at all what I was expecting, although I'm not really sure what I was expecting. The beginning 25% was a bit slow. It was packed with interesting information and I did not want to put it down, but wasn't really moving forward.

This book was serious, it was funny, it was seriously embarrassingly funny. I haven't laughed this hard from a book in a while. I found myself mortified right along with Rainer and Emily, Logan and Adeline, well okay, all the kids in the family.

The Haydenshire's are a tight knit family, with an over abundance of love. As grandpa says, seems like his son has kept momma knocked up their whole marriage. After 7 boys, they finally have their baby girl. They also raise a close family friends son, when they are killed. The children grow up extremely close, and then they take the girlfriend of their one son. But then, surprise 18 or so years after baby girl, a set of very mischievous twin boys comes along. Yep, count them up, 14 members to the family. Then let's add in the many girlfriends of the other brother's. Now we have a house full of well ordered chaos. Oh, and let's not forget they are all gifted with secret abilities.

What's going to happen when you have numerous sets of 20 something lovebirds in the house? A lot of seriously awkward situations. Who can you turn to, when your best friend is dating your baby sister, and you

need embarrassing relationship advice, but do not want to be scarred for life?

Well played Ms. Jillian, I want Lessons Learned, like yesterday. I can't believe you left us hanging like that.

My only issue would be, it was in need of some editing.

### **Reading Order**

Within The Realm(The Gifted Realm book 1)

Lesson Learned (The Gifted Realm book 2)

Every Action (The Gifted Realm book 3)

Rock Bottom(The Gifted Realm book 4)

An Angel All His Own (The Gifted Realm book 5)

All But Lost(The Gifted Realm book 6)

The Quelling Tide (The Gifted Realm book 7)

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### **Rae Ryans says**

I love Urban Fantasy, New Adult, and Romance. Within the Realm delivers all three in a unique world, with book boyfriend worthy characters, and a sassy red-head. There's more, of course, but Rainer Lawson and Emily really shine brighter than the others, and with good reason.

The majority of the story, you're in his head. Have I ever mentioned how much I love male point-of-view? No? Well, I do. As a woman, it's kind of awesome stepping into the male brain and I felt this was executed beautifully. Men always want to know what women think/want, well, that works both ways.

With Rainer, I liked how willing he is to help his friends and adoptive family. He even took care and checked-up on his good for nothing uncle. He's a character that has ultimate book boyfriend written all over him. There's this inner need to protect, especially Emily. I don't and won't spoil anything, but he's definitely got his work cut out for him.

Onto the world. Nicely done with weaving the world and back story together. You get a keen understanding of the magic, limitations, and how the gifted vs non-gifted world works. I didn't question any of it, and I really enjoyed the descriptions. The Dr. Pepper bit even made me smile.

I can't wait to read more of the series and watch these relationships unfold, but I did find myself struggling because of the speech tags in the beginning. It's personal style and it adds flair, don't get me wrong, but it took me until midway through the story to get used to seeing the tags used as opposed to said.

I did receive a copy in exchange for my opinion. While I also purchased this using my Prime monthly freebie, I don't count that as purchasing, and am thus disclosing.

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### **Nina ~ Meleth Bookaddicted ~ says**

3.5 Stars

So ... I stumbled upon WITHIN THE REALM without fully realizing what I would get myself into. I can't remember the last time I've read a sci-fi romance – not that I've read that many to begin with. So imagine my surprise when I finally, finally realized where the story was headed, haha. And it's not even sci-fi alone, with a bit of fantasy and new adult thrown in, it makes for one interesting and rare mix.

Most of the story is told from the hero's point of view – I can't even begin to say how much I liked that. I have always preferred stories which were at least told from both perspectives – because, as a woman, there's just something about being in the man's head that gets to me every time.

The characters in Jillian Neal's Gifted Realm series live in a world with gifted and non-gifted people. The gifted are much rarer, and the best and strongest of them formed a unit that is called the Elite which helps defending the masses against those people who chose to use their gifts for evil. It kind of reminded me of the movie Equilibrium, just minus all the gifts and magic.

The central characters of this story are Rainer and Emily, who have been in love with each other for a long time. Rainer has a very strong sense of right and wrong and is seeking to avenge the brutal murder of his family – and to achieve this he has to join the ranks of the powerful. She might have been the more sheltered, having grown up within a politically powerful family, but she definitely has some spunk and makes for quite a few funny moments.

This is a great introduction to a unique series and I am looking forward to read more!

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### **Sorcha O'Dowd says**

SO MUCH LOVE FOR THIS BOOK! 5 stars and full review to follow! <3

edit...

Well, wow! This was one damn incredible start to what I'm sure will continue to be an amazing series. Throughout this book the writing style gave me the kind of vibe I get when re-reading Harry Potter, that kind of thrill when you are entering a magical world that exists side by side with our own world. With 'Within the Realm' I almost felt like I was reading a kind of 'Harry Potter and the Auror years', and I absolutely adored every second of it. The way that the 'gifted' use energy from the earth and their surroundings was really clever, and I loved the way that the magical aspects of this story entwined so beautifully with the main storyline throughout the book.

Rainer Lawson is one of the most lovable heroes I have encountered in a while. Everything about him was just so genuine that I rooted for him straight from the word go, the relationship he had with Emily was just so beautiful to witness, especially as the start of the story had seen them in a relationship since they were seven. It was a really unique way of introducing a couple in this kind of book as it is usually a new love interest who comes in, so I absolutely adored seeing the strong friendship and years of love and how the trials they've faced in the past have made their relationship that much stronger in the present. I adored all the romance in this book, and it was a really lovely accompaniment to the drama and suspense side to the story as neither side overwhelmed it and it was left with a perfect balance to the story. I also loved how well-rounded the secondary characters were, and it really made the characters and story seem very real to me as the author managed to evoke so much emotion in me through the trials of all of her characters.

The story is also not without humour. I laughed so much whilst reading this book, as the writing style was witty, but not overly so, and with brilliant characters such as Logan, and especially Mrs. Haydenshire who was the perfect mother figure for the orphaned Rainer. The interactions between her and her husband in regards to their daughter's virtue was just hilarious. The over-protective father, yet more laid-back mother who tries to remind her husband that their daughter is no longer a baby and is going to have sex was just so funny that I spent a great portion of this book laughing at Rainer's utter humiliation when it came to having 'the talk' with his girlfriend's father.

The action and suspense in this story starts in earnest in the last third of this book, and I really connected with the story and found myself on the edge of my seat. Already my favourite character is Dan Vindico who has a trauma in his past which haunts him and which drives him in his mission to bring those using their powers for evil to justice. I can't wait to see how his character develops in the rest of the series.

A brilliant start to the 'Gifted Realm' series. 5 Stars!

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### **Carol [Goodreads Addict] says**

Within The Realm by Jillian Neal is book one in The Gifted Realm series. This book is kind of an introduction into the world of The Gifted Realm. It centers on one very large family, The Haydenshires. Mr. Haydenshire is a Governor and he and his wife have ten children. They are a loving, strong family.

Rainer Lawson's father was the Crown Governor when he and his wife were assassinated when Rainer was fourteen years old. Rainer went to live with the Haydenshires since they had been his family's closest friends. Rainer and the Haydenshire's only daughter, Emily, have also been in love since Rainer was eight years old. Rainer, Emily, Logan Haydenshire who is Rainer's best friend, and his girlfriend, Adeline, are all graduating from Venton Academy, which is an academy for the gifted. Rainer and Logan have been drafted to work for the Elite Iodex which is the highest of the Gifted's law enforcement.

The book concentrates mostly on the relationship between Rainer and Emily. They are still living in the Haydenshire's home but are adults and are beginning their adult careers. They are ready to take both their careers and their own relationship to another level. When two gifteds join together, it is a much deeper experience when they join their powers as well, and is one not to be taken lightly. Rainer and Emily were more than ready to take this step. Once they do, they clearly can't get enough of each other.

Logan's girlfriend, Adeline, has not had the same loving upbringing as Rainer and Logan. So their relationship is a little more complicated as Adeline struggles to accept the love of Logan and his family.

Along with good there is always bad. The Interfeci is the Gifted's organized crime syndicate. They are powerful, evil, and will go to any lengths to get what they want. As Logan turns twenty-one and comes into a substantial inheritance, it puts both he and Emily in their sites.

This was a great start in getting to know the Haydenshire family and this world that Jillian has created. I look forward to the next book, Lessons Learned, to see what is in store next for Rainer and Emily, Logan and Adeline, and The Gifted Realm.

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### **Momma says**

I love being surprised by a new book. Jillian certainly did it for me. Let me say that the back cover blurb does NOT do this book justice. It was amazingly well written. I am always leary of a new author... so many times, they need a few books under their belt before I consider them top notch. Not so with Jillian. She surprised me with the depth of character that she portrayed. Characters, who even without their Gifts, would still be as likeable and "real". The world she built around them and the explanation of the various Gifts was well thought out and although she spent quite a bit of time in the beginning of the book going over these things, it never got boring. It kept your attention from the start!

The characters.. oh the characters.. Quite honestly, I have a hard time picking my favorite. There are so many good ones. I guess I kinda have to go with Rainer and Emily since they are the main characters but the supporting characters are such that you want to know all of their stories as well! The connection between all of the characters makes it even more intense. I laughed so hard at some of the antics and embarrassing situations that the Haydenshire kids (and Rainer) got themselves into! As a mom to 6 kids myself, I loved their huge family!! The more the merrier, and the more humor filled situations to read!

**Rainer & Emily** : a love that began before either can even remember. Everyone has always known that they would be together, from the moment Emily dared Rainer to kiss her when she was 7.. I loved how Emily is constantly distracting Rainer and trying to get him to have sex (isn't that usually the guys job? ha!) while he continues to hold out wanting it to be special. The situations that they get themselves into amused me to no end.. When Rainer's tragic past starts to catch up to them, it will have you on the edge of your seat wondering what will happen next.

**Logan & Adeline** : Logan is Emily's brother and Rainer's best friend (talk about having issues talking about love life problems with your best friend.. Kinda hard when he's also your girlfriend's brother!). He and Adeline have been dating for a while but she is constantly taking care of her user mother.. I enjoyed watching these two and their relationship as it matures and they face challenges.

**The Haydenshires** : As a whole, I loved them. Governor Haydenshire is a typical dad. He has several boys but just one baby girl. Although she is grown, he has a hard time seeing her as anything but the little girl she once was. He is overprotective and goes off the deep end from time to time, but thankfully he has his loving wife to pull him back and talk some sense into him. Mrs. Haydenshire is the typical mom to many children. She knows which battles to pick and which ones to let go. I have to agree with Grandpa Haydenshire that the Governor has pretty much kept her pregnant for most of their marriage! ha!

This book is full of romance, some great steamy scenes (NA not YA!), and intrigue to keep you coming back for more. Like any great storyteller, Jillian manages to end it just when you don't want her to - leaving you hanging on the edge and panting for the next book (Lessons Learned). !

5 Stars! I loved it so much that I read it twice! ha!

\*\*I received a copy of this book in exchange for my honest review.

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### **Becca says**

I was given the book Within The Realm in order to give my open and honest opinion.

There was only one thing that I did not like and it was that I felt like the author took a little too much time in the beginning to tell what the world was and how everything worked and fell into place. I did like that once everything was explained that it was revealed that this was a world that was normal where humans that are gifted live.

Once the characters were built and I understood them, I fell in love with them. I loved the main characters of Rainier and Emily. Once I got passed the building that it took in the beginning, I was engrossed! The two main characters have been in love with each other for a long time. The character of Rainier was one that I liked right off the bat because he had such a strong belief of what was right and wrong in the world. The character of Emily is a sort of weaker character because she is an only child and her family is a powerful one. The two characters play off of each other well because they are both not headstrong. This was one of the qualities of the book that I absolutely loved. The two characters both have some rocky pasts that have brought them where they are today. I love reading back story about characters because I want to know what makes them tick! Jillian did a great job with this for me. I was not left craving any knowledge about the characters and why they were the way they were.

This book took you through the lives of these two young people as they struggle with love, power, and decisions. Overall, this was a very enjoyable read. I felt like I knew each of the characters enough to make a bond with the story that I could not be drawn away from reading it unless I absolutely had to be. I can't wait to read the next book in the series and see what is going to happen with Rainier and Emily! Overall, I would give this book FOUR STARS, just because it got a little wordy and deep into explanation sometimes. That is not to say that I did not absolutely LOVE IT!

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### **Anne - Books of My Heart says**

This review was originally posted on Books of My Heart

Review copy was received from NetGalley. This does not affect my opinion of the book or the content of my review.

I am reviewing the oldest book on my Netgalley shelf. On the surface, it looks like my kind of thing. New adults developing their lives in a world where the gifted have magic. My intuition was spot on when I kept putting it off since it wasn't really for me.

While it says new adult, **Within the Realm** starts in the final weeks of high school with two guys who are best friends and have steady girlfriends. Rainier and Logan. Rainier's parents were a big deal in the gifted community. They were murdered 7 years ago and he came to live with his parents' friends, the Haydenshires, and also his best friend, Logan. Rainier's girl, since a young age, is Emily Haydeshire, the only girl child.

I can't really express my issues without spoilers, so be forewarned. The flashback kind of history is ok since it gives us a sense of Rainier, his parents who were active in the gifted government and an idea of the government structure and the talents different gifted have. Still it didn't give me enough on either of those topics. Both Rainier and Logan are going into an elite investigative force after high school, and Emily is joining an elite team, sort of like a sports team, from what I can tell.

Here, we get those last few weeks of high school and part of the summer before they start their jobs. So the high school stuff is never my favorite thing. (view spoiler)

Adeline has a mother who is an addict and forces Adeline to earn money for her. After the one of the mother's boyfriends decides he should have both the mother and Adeline, the Haydenshires invite Adeline to live with them when she escapes. So now both couples live in the Haydeshire household.

By the end of this story, they just barely start their jobs with the two couples moving into their own place. The book about their gifts, and the investigative work is likely to be the next one in the *Gifted Realm series*, **Lessons Learned**. I am sorry to say I don't care anymore.

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### **Gabby says**

This book will grip you from word one and pull you so far into The Realm, you'll be wishing you were gifted like all of the book's characters! First and foremost, the writing is amazing. Jillian has a way with words where you don't just read them, you feel them. Her character development and introduction to her characters is mind-blowing. You begin to know these people on a level that makes them seem real. That is a very mighty task for an author to accomplish and Jillian does it with ease. I cannot even think of a book I have read (and I've read a lot!) that has had such in-depth description on each personality. Each person has their own alluring backstory. You will love reading about each and every one of them.

In addition to the great descriptive writing, the plots are intertwined with romance, suspense, and excitement. Ranier and Emily's love affair is sweet and heartfelt but is also molten hot and only builds hotter as the book progresses. And their love story has a spin that is not so common in the romance novel world. Their love has been long-standing. They have loved each other since they were little kids and their extenuating circumstances add to the uniqueness of their romance. Although they are young (early 20s), their love is deep and very real... and VERY steamy. Ranier and Emily know each other better than they know themselves but they both dive into the new world of taking their relationship to the next level. Jillian does a fantastic job of pulling us into their mind frames and reminds us just how out-of-this-world exciting it is to explore our sensual selves with the ones we love. I would not characterize this book as 'young adult' even though the two main characters are young adults. The scenes continue to build and it reads like a hot romance. I would not want my daughters to read this as teenagers. Yes, it's THAT hot.

Along with this book's wonderful writing, amazing character development, and hot love scenes, it also has a dramatic and suspenseful plotline. The evil Wretchkinsides and the entire Interfeci Criminal Organization is

a constant looming danger to all of the Gifted Realm's main characters. No one is safe.

The 'gifted' storyline is intriguing and each of the character's powers and gifts add even more to what is already a great book. If you're looking for something new, fresh, and original, this series is definitely for you!

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### **Dianne says**

With a little fantasy, a little Sci-fi, a close-knit group of characters and some young love, **Within the Realm** sets the stage and builds a world where "gifted" humans live hidden among the "regular" masses. Author Jillian Neal's first book in her new series, Gifted Realm, introduces us to Rainer and Emily, two young people who have been in love with each other since childhood. Rainer is a determined strong-willed young man with a rigid sense of right and wrong. In the past, his wealthy and politically powerful family was brutally murdered and he means to avenge their deaths while rising up from the shadow of his father's popularity by joining the ranks of the Elite Officers of the Gifted Realm police. Each Elite member must have strong gifts and be able to defend against attacks by those who choose to use their gifts for evil. Rainer's strong abilities to transfer energy and use it as a tool or weapon make him an ideal candidate. Emily is the pampered only daughter in a large and very close, politically powerful family. Although a very strong "gifted" person, Emily is more obsessed with trying to break down Rainer's defenses regarding having sex, than playing an active roll in the betterment of her kind. Still, Emily is everything to Rainer, as he is to her. When the evils of the past resurface, threatening her life, Rainer will risk everything to keep her safe.

As her first book in a new series, Jillian Neal has achieved a monumental task by gathering her characters, fleshing them out and creating a world for them to live in. She has built in several sub-plots that niggle at your brain, because you NEED to know what happens to these diverse personalities, their pasts and their present conflicts. Why? Because you JUST KNOW they have a story that's dying to be told and you're willing to watch for the next book to get some answers!

I'd like to thank author Jillian Neal for sharing **Within the Realm** with me, in exchange for my honest review.

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Series: The Gifted Realm, #1

Number of Pages: 423

Rating: 3.50

Genre: Adult Paranormal Romance

Age Recommendation: Adults

Available at: Amazon / Barnes & Noble

*For more reviews check out Tome Tender's Book Blog or find us on Facebook.*

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### **Rosa Sharon (iScream Books Blog) says**

*"She'd dared him to kiss her on the cheek when he was eight years old, and he'd done so happily. This had come a year after she'd informed him that he was her boyfriend. They'd been together ever since; it was the way his world worked."*

This is a book that I grabbed back in 2014 and just now got around to. My tastes have changed and developed so much since then that I asked myself what I was thinking at the time. I don't read much paranormal, sci-fi, or fantasy so this was a stretch for me. I struggled a bit trying to grasp how the whole **Gift Realm** worked and what many of the words I'd never heard of before meant. I'm all about reading romance and I figured love is love, right?

What I enjoyed most about this story is the family aspect. The relationship among friends and how they could decide to become blood brothers and mean it. How parents could have so many children and then collect even more by accepting their kid's friends as their own as well. I especially loved how Emily decided Rainer was her boyfriend when he was only eight years old and they formed a bond that was unbreakable.

The gifted and non-gifted is an intriguing concept and I admire the author's imagination for developing the storyline. The witty banter between friends and family was entertaining and I could really feel the emotion between the characters.

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### **Philippa Jones says**

I have really enjoyed this book!!! Very easy to read and even easier to fall in love with the characters. Jillian Neal does an amazing job at helping the reader "see" and "feel" everything that the characters are going through. You immediately feel an attachment to each one. The intimate relationship between Rainer and Emily is unlike any I have read before and leaves you with a strong sense of unconditional love. I can not wait to read the next book in the series and see where their pasts and futures take them!

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