



The Gold Warrior

Clare London

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Maen is a Gold Warrior, a defender of Aza City, a world controlled by the Queen and her womankind where the best of men are maintained for the military and the women's pleasure. A favorite of his imperious Mistress and a leader among his men, Maen is too cautious to seek casual sexual satisfaction and so stays alone, taking his comfort in ensuring a stable and controlled world.

That world is thrown into disarray by Dax, a bold and challenging new Bronze soldier who excites Maen with his fierce hero worship and leads them to a forbidden affair. They find themselves thrown together in a dangerous and hostile environment without the support of the City and far away from their loyalties, and Maen finds himself risking everything for Dax - his position; his loyalties; and eventually, his life.

NOTE: this book was withdrawn Oct 2010, and re-issued with its sequel Twisted Brand in the single volume BRANDED, also at Dreamspinner Press.

The Gold Warrior Details

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Author : Clare London

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From Reader Review The Gold Warrior for online ebook

Bedtime Stories says

World building (matriarchal, corrupt society) and plot (two male warriors discover that not everything is as shiny as their mistresses make them believe) would have interested me, but the author's flowery language and long-winded style drove me off very quickly. Apparently it's quite the good story, if that sort of writing doesn't bother you.

Becky Black says

Well written and enjoyable fantasy story, centred on a soldier who learns the world he lives in and defends is much less black and white than he's been trained to believe. The first person narration supports this gradual changing of the main character's world view. There's a sequel to this story, so there's no "happy ever after" at the end of this one, no easy answers to the characters's problems. I'm looking forward to reading the sequel and seeing how the new situation the protagonists are in by the end of this book works out.

The worldbuilding is complex and multilayered, as are the characters who inhabit the world. I sometimes find these fantasy societies a bit hard to swallow, they're sometimes contrived and don't seem sustainable, but I definitely bought this one.

Rosie says

4.5 stars rounded up. I've had this on my kindle for years and just never got around to it, but I'm glad that I finally did because it turned out to be a very engrossing read.

Ryes says

I've heard before that it's difficult to write something fresh and original because everything falls into 7 basic plots:

1. man vs. nature
2. man vs. man
3. man vs. the environment
4. man vs. machines/technology
5. man vs. the supernatural
6. man vs. self
7. man vs. god/religion

The Gold Warrior is certainly packed! It covers at least 2, 3, 4, and 6, maybe 7. I haven't read anything as

dense in action and world building as *The Gold Warrior* in a while, and I appreciated the book for giving me that.

Maen lives in a matriarchal society where all men are considered beneath women and given more menial jobs while important jobs and positions of decision making are held by women.

Maen is considered one of the more privileged men because he is a Gold Warrior, the highest honor given to men. Soldiers defend Aza City and also give pleasure to Ladies of important households. Men are either picked to serve as soldiers or they're cast aside as Remainders. Maen takes his status and his duties very seriously and has never questioned the way things are. He practically worships his mistress and takes his daily Devotions (pills to make men stronger, among other things).

The arrival of Dax throws his perception of his world off balance. Dax was the son of a Remainder before being selected to be a Bronzemen and doesn't see things through rose-colored glasses. Dax is not like the other Bronzemen and more outspoken. Maen likes that about Dax even though he doesn't like everything Dax has to tell him.

The beginning nearly scared me off, but I'm glad it didn't because I enjoyed the *The Gold Warrior* and can't remember a time in the past few months where I've had this much fun with a book. Chapter 1 is a lengthy info dump, not just with narration but also with dialogue between Maen and his Mistress Luana in the form of reminiscing and reminders. But after that first chapter, I couldn't tear myself away from the book.

Clare London fleshes out all her characters, not just the main ones. Maen is an intelligent man but being a soldier is all he knows and he lacks experience in anything else. Dax is younger, but in a lot of ways, he's wiser than Maen.

The Gold Warrior is part of a series; *The Twisted Brand* is the follow up. The story is just as much about Maen's disillusionment as it is about romance. Maen is understandably resistant to anything that threatens his view of the perfect society of Aza City, even while he acknowledges that what Dax is telling him is true. Dax complicates a lot of things for him, including his emotions. Maen's never fallen in love before and he doesn't know what to do with the conflicted feelings. On the one hand, he would never commit a treasonous act such as developing a relationship with another person, but on the other, he can hardly control himself around Dax.

The Gold Warrior juggles a lot of issues, but I think London handled it beautifully. She paints wonderful flawed characters and a vivid image of their world. Another aspect I loved about the book was that it wasn't just driven by personal conflicts alone. There was plenty of action of the teeth-gritting, seat-gripping variety. (Although there is enough of the bedroom variety too.) I could barely check myself for wanting to skip whole pages ahead just to see what happened next.

If you have plenty of time set aside (because this story sucks you in and holds you fast), *The Gold Warrior* makes an excellent read! I'm hoping the second book comes soon.

Review first posted at Rainbow Reviews

PURCHASE LINK

Cat says

Wow.

That was my final impression after reading this story. Its been one of the most interesting and emotional experiences when reading an M/M title and definitely one of those that you'd want to use to introduce someone who's just starting to get interested in the genre.

The plotline is explained and in-depth. It doesn't revolve around the relationship itself so much as the main character and how he struggles with his situation but doesn't ignore the relationships either. Maen is a lovely character which pulls at your heart strings at times. He's grown up in a very strict society and been thoroughly trained. He's subjected to the same regiment of medications as the others but he seems to be one of the men most affected by them. His outward appearance is of a strong, adult male but inside he's still a teenager. Then we have Dax who is physically a teenager and also someone who grew up outside of this strict society but inside he's much more adult then Maen. It provides an interesting juxtaposition that normally I don't go for but really worked here.

The exchanges between characters was handled nicely and were very interesting. Relationships - whether m/m or m/f - were handled remarkably well and the same. The book ended in what I can only describe as soft, dramatic, sadness with a streak of intense hope which makes a reader crave for more but still satisfied *just* enough if there isn't another volume (thank god there is though!).

This is one of those titles that I would LOVE to see made into a movie (if done right of course)! Definite must read! And I don't get to say that much (cause I'm a bit picky :P).

Jaime says

There are a lot of really likable characters in this book, and a world rich in details and ripe for exploration. This is a great read. The sex scenes are pretty hot, too.

J. Vaughn says

I never understood why Branded (Gold Warrior 1 and 2) didn't have more fans. I LOVED it. Claire sucks the reader into a world where women are dominant and men are slaves. The world building is detailed and believable. It's fast-paced and heartbreaking with a satisfying ending. It's the kind of fantasy love-story I adore. I'm delighted to see that it's out as a series now. Maybe Claire will finally get the recognition she deserves.

Cyn Coons says

This review first appeared on the website I write for, Boys Next Door.

I'll admit it, the idea of a female dominant society with a harem of men at their beck and call just makes me happy. I like it even more when the system is rotten and riddled with abuse. Doubly so when there are noble, self-sacrificing heroes who are going to move heaven and hell to save what's important to them.

This is a richly developed world, there are hints of the history of the civilization included in the story that only make me want to delve deeper in. London has promised us a sequel to this novel next year. I'm hoping to get some of the mysteries of the history of this world answered then.

I really liked the characters, but I was slightly disappointed by staying the in main character's head the entire time. Now, I know he's the main character and all, but I wanted to know what the hell was going on in some of the other characters' heads.

Maen is our main character. He's a gold warrior, the elite of the warriors who guard over their mistresses and provide them with their every need. Yes. Every need. There is male/female sex in here. Don't have a hissy fit. We need it for plot development. You won't have to turn in your BL Fangirl membership card if you get turned on by reading it.

Maen is comfortable in his place in this world. He finds comfort in taking orders and caring for his mistress. At least, until he meets Dax.

See, every year the mistresses congregate and participate in an auction to buy new members for their household. The young men they purchase are ranked as Bronze warriors. Bronze boys are trained in pleasuring their mistresses and in the art of war. As the warriors get older, they are raised to the rank of Silver. Only the best of the best are able to rise to the rank of Gold warrior. And, when Maen sees Dax, he thinks that Dax has the potential to be a Gold.

However, Dax stirs up feelings that Maen doesn't quite know what to do with. Dax is a free-thinking young man who questions the way that the city is run and rank hierarchy. Maen just doesn't know quite how to handle Dax or his own thoughts, honestly.

I've always loved London's writing, but this just makes me love it even more. It's one of those books that when I finished it, I was pissed that I was going to have to wait for a while to find out what happens to the characters.

Emily G says

I'm lucky enough to know the author of this book and the artist who did the cover art, however, my rating isn't biased, I couldn't put this book down (or its sequel for that matter).

The book is set on another world where women rule and the men are their soldiers, who also provide them pleasure. Maen is a Gold Warrior, there is no higher status for a man and he is content with his lot and devoted to the City that he lives in and his Mistress that he serves. However, this all changes with the arrival in the household of a Bronzeman called Dax.

In an attack by the Exiles, the Gold Warrior and the Bronzeman are taken prisoner and a relationship begins to blossom between them, something that is an executable offence - men are only allowed to be together when they reach the rank of Silver Captain. When Maen and Dax escape back to the City, he finds that they don't want him back and his beliefs and ideals start to crumble around him.

Maen is a fascinating character, so stoic, so devoted to the life he has been raised to and when it lets him down, he really doesn't want to believe it and ends up letting go of the thing that is most precious to him.

Tamarrion Lash says

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