



The Shattered Door

Brandon Witt

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After a tortured childhood and years of soul-searching, Brooke Morrison has finally settled into a comfortable life. While his sexuality prohibits him from practicing his degree in youth ministry in a church setting, he's found a fulfilling job as a youth counselor at a residential treatment facility in Colorado. He falls in love, marries the man of his dreams, and makes peace with God. He's happy.

Then his buried past drags him back to the Ozarks.

The life Brooke has worked so hard to build is crumbling in his hands in the face of painful memories and past abuse, and his confidence is withering. In El Dorado Springs, where his nightmares come to life, Brooke desperately seeks closure life doesn't offer. Brooke must find value in himself, in his marriage, and in the world around him—and create the hope and perseverance to keep his past from swallowing him whole.

The Shattered Door Details

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From Reader Review The Shattered Door for online ebook

Kristie says

Brooke is hurting. How could he not be? This book... OMG this book! I can't say I loved it, and liking it seems wrong as well. This was one of those stories that made me feel a lot of things, a lot of them bad, and a lot of them angry, few of them good and happy. I almost felt emotionally manipulated into finishing it at a time I didn't want to. There is so much hate, prejudice, and mental abuse in Brooke's background that I felt suffocated. It has had such a lasting effect on him, to the point that it is very debilitating. It hurt to read. It hurt a fuck of a lot.

And then there's Jed. He's had everything in a life that Brooke should have had. Loving parents and family, a career he loves, and acceptance. He's the other side of the coin from Brooke. He's the light, where everything in Brooke's life has been dark. Perhaps if there was more Jed in the book, it would not have hurt so much. The problem with that is story would have suffered. Hurt is what you're meant to feel. You need to feel that hurt Brooke has inside him, so that when he comes out of it in the end, the finish is all the better.

I have a lot of problems with this book because of Brooke's mother. At one point someone even tries to justify the reasons why his mother is the way she is. There are always reasons, right? The problem with that is everyone has a choice. She chooses wrong for so much of her life, she has no redeeming qualities. She's hateful, horrible, abusive... she's the whole kitchen sink filled with garbage. I was sorry to learn of her own childhood and her own problems in life. What I can't understand is why she felt the need to take it out on her own kid. Then there is the religious factor. This small town with their limited ability to be understanding of any different lifestyles that don't toe the line of their own frustrated me beyond belief. There is also a certain level of unbelievably that goes along with some parts of the story. Still...

I could go on and on. And it probably seems like I didn't find much to like in this story. That would not be true...

Throughout the story of Brooke's life, I was so contemplative. It was easy to fall into the world where Brooke lived, and equally easy to compare it to my own life. Looking back, I realized that I was comparing everything to Brooke. It made me think... like, a lot. It made me think about a lot of things. Made me wonder how I would have handled the same types of situations. What would I do? Brooke is a very, very, very good person. It's crushing to see someone that bright and wonderful, go through such horrible things in their life. What is wonderful about it is how he comes out of it in the end. When he shatters that door in the end, breaks through both figuratively and in reality, it's awesome, and he's finally free. So while this is not a book I would normally read, much less recommend, I did, and I do, and I hope you also get something out of it.

Thank you to NetGalley for a copy of this book for my honest review.

Marc | Rainbow Gold Reviews says

This book has been on my TBR since 2013. Yes, that's right. It took 4.5 years for me to get the up the courage to finally read this truly beautiful, yet devastatingly heartbreaking book.

I have heard so much about it from people who loved it, but who were emotionally shattered after reading this story. It became one of those reads, where I knew it would be amazing, but I would not be able to read it with my heart intact. This special category of books usually takes me longer to get to, because I have to be in the right mood and steel myself (books like 'Chase in Shadow' by Amy Lane, 'Bloodlines' by Andrea Speed or 'Something like Autumn' by Jay Bell). But they are unforgettable. So, don't say I didn't warn you, but if you are ready for this journey, I am certain you will not regret it.

I am so glad that this story was produced as audiobook, because I have more time to listen to stories than I have to read them (I'm a very slow reader). I have listened to tons of audiobooks, but I have to say Andrew McFerrin truly impressed me here. This story is complex and emotionally charged and he did a brilliant job. I can strongly recommend the audiobook, if you enjoy listening to books like I do. He truly delivers on the kind of on-point narration that this beautiful book deserves.

This book is not a mere romance. The gay romance is an important part of this book, but certainly not the focus. However, for me the romance was the anker I needed when the angst of the book tried to crush my heart again and again. Brooke Morrison, the main character, finds his perfect guy in the first part of the book. A great guy, with a wonderful, rich and welcoming family. It gives the couple a very strong foundation with a security net. There is someone truly special and it is clear the two belong together. A fact that is so clear that even the MC does not question it. Mostly.

Both the MC and his guy (as well as most of their friends and family) have faith and Brooke's relationship to god is very important to him. He knew he was attracted to guys from a young age and it seemed to be a sin to him and threatened his view of the world. He wanted to be good and worthy for god, but was never able to 'pray the gay away' and constantly thought he was disappointing god. That was until he just accepted himself and found that brought him closer to god again than anything else.

Even while not all people of faith accept his sexuality, his own faith gives strength to Brooke and has always been important to him. I love that he was able to find himself and accept his sexuality. I have always been interested in religion and was raised catholic, but even when I realized I was gay, I still felt loved by god. When I came out, all the people I know who are very religious like my grandmother and a few of my friends supported me without blinking. Even though the church as a whole is often 10 steps behind the times, there are many people who understand god's will in loving each other and see everyone as god-made and perfect, just as they are. Even if they may not personally understand same-sex attraction.

Homosexuality and Faith are two topics that do not seem to go together easily, but the author does an amazing job of showing the beauty of Brooke's faith and the strength it gives to him (something he wants to share with young adults who are struggling), but also the difficulties he has at times. It makes certain things more problematic for him, closes some doors for him permanently and makes him very vulnerable for attacks.

There are many very different characters with different views on god and homosexuality and Brandon Witt manages to humanize even the most mean-spirited and poisonous persons, without excusing their behavior. There is a truly wonderful cast of characters; some of them very unique and unforgettable, all of them lovingly crafted by the author even in their flaws. There are also very difficult characters who are easy to judge and hate, but who are treated with grace and more understanding from the author than I would have been able to come up with for them.

Over time, as readers follow Brooke as he confronts his difficult past, we learn terrible things that have happened to him and other characters that are truly heartbreaking and give new insights into many

characters. Readers start to understand how complex and multi-layered they are, just like we are as humans.

There are many problems Brooke has to face and I loved how realistically the author handles them. No Deus-Ex-Machina here, with all the problems suddenly solving themselves or someone being able to resolve them through a string of most fortunate and puzzling miracles. Some things are bad and unfair and stay that way, because there are no easy solutions. Some things that threaten to blow up in the biggest, most dramatic way, end up being resolved in a much more quiet and unexpected way. It felt real to me and thus I was much more invested.

The journey of Brooke's life is full of unexpected twists and turns. It is full of love and faith and friendship. It is full of unexpected support and unimaginable hatred. It is full of heartbreaking grief and unending hope. It shows us the best and the worst of people. The things that we can change and the things we need to accept. It is a truly complex and well-written story of a man, who has captured my heart forever. I was captivated by Brooke's story and cared so much about what happened to him and the family he surrounds himself with that the things that happen in this book really affected me. But that is the sign of a great story and a fantastic narration.

9.5/10 Pots of Gold (95% recommended) - Compares to 4.75/5 Stars

Kazza says

Brandon Witt webcam interview and giveaway January 10-12th

<http://ontopdownunderbookreviews.com/...>

Full review at <http://ontopdownunderbookreviews.com/...>

This book is not a MM romance. It is LGBT writing that happens to have a gay man as the narrator, and that gay man happens to have a partner. But the book is about so much more. It is about being beaten down psychologically, trying to be a good person, trying to believe in yourself, despite adversity, a relationship with God, a relationship with your partner. It is about creating another family and not allowing someone that we are taught to love and obey from birth, no matter what, to have so much power over you. Our parents are deified by us, by the Ten Commandments, and by society. It is hard to break the need, the instruction to be a good child worthy of love, no matter our age. That process is a slow one. Brandon Witt nailed that. It is also very much about religion and being a gay man trying to find himself when many have told him that it is a sin and an abomination. That he is compared to a paedophile. That he will go to Hell has been preached at him for years, on top of a mother who backs it up in her own toxic way. A powerful piece of writing. After reading *Submerging Inferno*, *Rising Frenzy Clashing Tempest*, and now *The Shattered Door*, whatever Brandon Witt writes, I shall read.

Mark says

This was an incredibly brave book I think. The bare bones of the story is of a gay man returning to his home town to encounter and face up to the past he fled which includes an appallingly cruel mother and unresolved side issues of rejection and self acceptance which is complicated by an unexplained situation with his work which involved caring for and counselling young offenders.

It is also a love story, a story of injustice and intolerance, of deep friendships and family ties and central to the whole thing, and it is this as a gay Christian that I found so moving, is the struggle of men and women seeking a relationship with God to find the support in a Church that is not renowned for its tolerance or openness.

The characters are, to a large extent and with one or two exceptions, well drawn and Witt captures the repartee and cut and thrust of friends and lovers really well I think. He communicates that sense of common history and experience between friends without it becoming cloying or heavily artificial or obviously false. I am not saying he always achieves this but there are more hits than misses here. As a first person narrative it works because we encounter the world through Brooklyn's eyes and these eyes are largely clear and positive though they do, from time to time, become jaded and bitter. The other characters speak and communicate clearly and openly and so his response is one which we can follow and understand. A small caveat here would be perhaps that some of the characters are a little too good to be true and the faith positions of one or two, Sue his Aunt in particular, smack of having been jammed on the top of a not particularly believable character. She is the figure of the 'simple woman of faith' but she did not ring true for me and so her fears and responses and minor repentances always seemed a tad dry and dusty. Having said that I think some of the characters were fabulous and even if they were not real I would want them to be in my friendship circle or sitting next to me at Church.

That is one inevitable drawback to a book such as this. I am a catholic and found Witt spoke to me in a good deal of the narrative drive, especially in the hero's own faith journeying and the questions he had had to address and indeed with which he was still struggling but I do wonder whether many people coming to this book without a faith and therefore perhaps without the mindset of Brooke would see no deeper than the idea that it was a book about prejudice and the intolerance of the Church and not see Brooke's quest as a genuine and reasonable one or indeed one worth wasting any time over. This would seem to me to be a shame. Though it would be a small circle of interest if dwelling too much on the specifics I think Witt really addresses all sorts of questions about trust and fidelity to friend and family, about judging by appearance and the foulness of hypocrisy, about freedom and the courage to be real which are, I suppose, basic questions of humanity.

My negatives are few but are, for me, real. When this goes to a second edition, and I certainly hope it will, the publishers must get a better proof reader and punctuation expert. I had begun to mark the mistakes in the book but after 40 I thought it superfluous. Words are spelt wrong on a regular basis, apostrophes sometimes seem to have lives of their own and words are sometimes omitted in the most unfortunate of circumstances. At one point our hero is speaking to a young lad who is coming out to him

'Before I could stop him, he fell forward and wrapped his around my waist and pulled tightly against me'

It is obvious what word is missing but the fact that it is just smacked of some cheap double entendre. Evidently that is not what was meant but it is unfortunate to say the least. This is one of a number of such mistakes which come at emotionally charged moments in the narrative and jar horribly.

There is also the perpetual hazard of the omnipresent gorgeous people. Some of you who have read other of my reviews have perhaps encountered my dislike of this need for authors to write as though everyone in the world is either beautiful/once was/is on the way to being or they are on the side of the Troglodytes. I find this continual having to 'big up' the beauty of characters annoying. (Of course it could be rank jealousy I acknowledge but I do think it is more than just me feeling bereft that I am not an English Brad Pitt.) Plain people can be lovely too and they can also be very romantically involved I am sure. Wouldn't it be great if just once the heroes and heroines of these books were allowed to be just normal and did not need to be

straight off Mt Olympus. Maybe i should start a campaign for ordinary looking plebs to dominate some romance plots.

Having griped and moaned I would not want any person to think that i am heavily criticizing this novel. I found it very moving from all sorts of angles and, in relation to the whole misplaced temptation to make gay and paedophile synonymous, I think it was an honest and brilliant account. Thanks Brandon. Really worth reading.

David Leger says

Despite the heavily religious theme, I found this to be a good read. It is a gay coming of age story. It is well crafted. It made me care about many of the characters, despise some, and pity one. Any book that makes you feel that strongly about the characters is a good read. If, like me, you are not religious, you need to be able to look at that part of the novel objectively rather than personally, otherwise you won't enjoy the book. I can understand how religion is so important to the characters, even if it isn't to me.

Pavellit says

Brooke Morrison's story is truly captivating, emotional and very thought provoking . A story for a rough live and struggles. Accepting yourself as a gay and trying to discover if God still loves you.

Even accepting the cruelty of a mother's "love". A toxic mother who constantly tears you apart. A dismissive mother who make you feel unworthy and a mistake of nature. After all, you can't exactly dump your mom and then jump online to look for a new one.

Now. The narrator, Andrew McFerrin, did a truly superb job, nails ever voice astonishingly.

I am so glad I read this remarkable book! Yes, it was a very heavy read with several moments stopping your breath but it is a powerful piece of LGBT fiction that need to be placed on the most visible spot on your bookshelf.

Thank you mother nature for giving a couple rainy days and thank you Mr.Witt for this penetratingly fascinating book!

God bless you!

John Sontag says

Although this book is well constructed, written with love and care, and edited perfectly, it does nothing to help eliminate the chasm between religion and homosexuality. I enjoyed the characters and their journeys, but I found the message that this book gives is unrealistic. It is a good story. But, ultimately I cannot agree with its entire premise. The story has been told before, many times. And this just didn't work for me. The characters were just two dimensional and lacked that real depth that made you feel their motivations. So many others have tackled this subject and been more successful in maintaining a more realistic resolution. Brandon Shire and Jim Grimsley are great examples of writers who have realistically portrayed the real power of what religion can do.

I find it astounding that so many people can't let go of the simple fact that god, in whatever form you choose to imagine, can ever accept homosexuality. There will always be a need for religion, just not a religion that makes hate a part of its doctrine. Part of what it does is help us as a society to be moral. It teaches us to love one another. But there is no amount of twisting and turning and interpretation of the bible that will ever reconcile it with being gay. Some people, out of necessity have deluded themselves into believing that somehow god, or jehovah or whomever will accept them into some form of organized religion. That is not to say that religion is some form does not have its place in our world, for I believe that without it, we would lose our capacity for caring, for love, to live moral, ethical lives. Being gay has nothing to do with some supposed god, it is simply what is in our genetic makeup. Gay and god simply are diametrically incompatible with each other. I understand how some of us choose to use the bible and it's many interpretations to allow them to be a part of some religion, but they are deluding themselves into thinking that they are in any way accepted by religious heterosexuals. Religion is for those who feel that they need it. Some of us don't. At least not the part that tells us who we are. What I'm trying to say is don't ever, not ever try to tell me who I am.

I can easily see why so many people gave this novel 5 star reviews. It is well written and tells them EXACTLY what they want to hear. For myself, it just shows how the two are so completely incompatible. I am gay and in a 35 year relationship. My life partner and I have done nothing but good, caring and loving things for our fellow man. We are loved by others and have tried to make a difference in the world. Without god. That should be enough.

Gitte TotallyBookedBlog says

Reviewed on: <http://totallybookedblog.com/2014/01/...>

I think I can safely say that this story is one which has touched me and affected me more than many before it. Every so often, and I mean **often**, I had to stop reading and try and process and digest what I'd just read. Call me naïve, hell, call me ignorant, but I have **never** in my thirty-eight years of life come across anything remotely close to what I just read. I grew up in five different countries, lived in more small villages, towns and cities than is typical growing up, yet I have never come across such hatred or even personally known of its existence. Yet exist it does, sadly. It breaks my heart.

However, this story is not just a story of prejudice and hate, it's a story of family and friendships, of support

and guidance, of love and hope. What I have to mention is that there is obviously a heavy theme of religion which isn't for everyone. It actually isn't something I myself enjoy in books, however, this story is about so much more and if you're like me, you will fall in love with the characters and the battle of staying true to who you are to achieve contentment and happiness in life.

What our hero Brooklyn has to go through as a gay Christian whose vocation in life (not job may I add) is helping kids in youth groups, is truly appalling. Not only has he had a traumatic childhood, it literally continues into his adulthood. This guy is still finding his place in life whilst his sexuality, his beliefs, his past and his present makes him question himself tremendously. His growth and his strength in this story is immense as he finds love and purpose. His wanting to be accepted for who he is; well it's heart-breaking. How many times can you be labelled something horrible, be negatively judged by the society within which you live, be treated atrociously before it breaks you? Before you feel there's no choice but to give in or give up?

‘What if I just stayed in bed? What if I simply never left my house again? What if I just quit breathing and drifted away?’ ~ Brooke

Yes, I go to church, yes I'm a believer, no my Christianity by definition if there is such a thing, does not play a major part in how I treat other people or how I perceive and view the world. What plays a part is my own sense of what's right and what's wrong. The fundamentals and yard sticks, if you will, are there in society and who initially put them there, where it all began, what its role is and how you and I follow. Well, that's an ongoing discussion in life and has no place in this review. But love does. Because love does not discriminate, love does not judge, love is the fundamental, the yardstick, the guide. Love is not wrong. Love conquers fear of the unknown and brings on hope. With a majority, you'll always find a minority and vice versa, they walk hand in hand. The difficult but important thing is to **not** judge by who is the loudest but by what you feel in your heart when you truly examine it.

Brooke meets Jed at what I suppose is a crucial moment in his life. He's finding his feet on his own and coming to terms with who he is out of hiding; away from home. He's also standing at a crossroad due to the health of his Mum back home.

“You're the man I've longed for and prayed for.” – Jed

There's one emotional scene in the rain where a question is asked and the poignancy of this story, through the words said, plays out between Jed and Brooke. This scene right here is the crux of it and I cried with happy tears.

Jed was fantastic for Brooke, he was the light to the dark, the certainty to the uncertainty. He brought humour, support, love, strength and a balanced voice to the journey.

“Goodnight, Brooke. Someday, I want to dance in an elevator with you.” – Jed

Reading *The Shattered Door* I couldn't help question everything. I'm a maudlin thinker anyway and get caught up in my own thoughts so much so that the world disappears, I can be a moody bitch at times yet this story made me into a raging mad woman. I hated humanity in this story. I hated what this small collection of people thought was right to do in the name of religion. I hated certain characters, one in particular who broke the mold for nomination of world's worst Mum.

“You are worthless, you dumb little fuck.” ~ Rose

I can safely say hate here and I own that hate, because it's an emotion, what I consequently do with that emotion is the important thing. What I did was, I cried at the injustice, at the depravity, at the violence, at the hatred through verbal abuse. I raged at the prejudice, at the fear of the unknown which can turn ugly, at the wrongness, but I did this all in the sanctuary of my own living room, best place really for your very own 'soap box'.

We all have a beginning and we all have an end, what we choose to do in the middle is all us; it's on us!

Now, I'm not perfect, I too can sometimes judge too easily and later regret that fact, I know this, and I own it. But I do not understand, and I never will, how hatred can be aimed at love, what is more beautiful? Love can be all encompassing and comes with many faces and in many guises and through many actions. It should be celebrated, not sullied by fear and labels.

So, after my crying and the raging, I rejoiced in the love and the hope that came out of the hate and the darkness. I celebrated the strength and the bravery and the unwavering faith of our characters. I was absolutely exhausted by the end I have to tell you!

What an incredibly well written emotional story, as if you haven't already guessed HA! It really is quite a journey our Brooke goes on, one which I **strongly** encourage **everyone** to read. It'll hurt, it'll make you question, yet it will also bring home the importance of respect, decency, the good that exists and the importance of faith, whatever that might be, and importantly it brings home hope. It will also make you smile through tears and chuckle a few times too at the sarcasm and irony. It was passionate, intense, beautiful and poignant.

'How wonderful it would be to not care what others thought.'

Karen says

Wow! I don't know where to begin. What a great book. Was slow to start, but didn't take long to be totally immersed in it. A book about a Gay Christian Man doubting his way of life. His search for God's approval of his sexuality. Brooke from infant to adult struggled for his mother's love. A mother who couldn't love him unconditionally. Being hurt over and over again by his mother's abusive lifestyle, Brooklyn leaves and finally finds love and a job with troubled youth, until he is falsely accused of hurting one of the boys, and loses his job. Coincidence or not, he is called home to help with his mother who had a stroke, can his life get any worse? Does he find the approval he is looking for? Will he be accepted for who he is, and will he ever be able to do what he loves most? Did he ever truly exist in his mother's eyes? You will have to read the book to find out! This book brought me to tears many times. Brandon truly has as much of a gift to write, as he does the gift of helping and teaching the kids he loves so much. I will be looking forward to many more books by Brandon Witt!!

Jane says

Like a Phoenix rising from the ashes, gay Brooklyn Morrison, rises from the ashes of his miserable childhood. A life with a verbally, and mentally abusive single mother. A life lived in squalor, drunkenness, strange men and unspeakable horrors. Add this to the shame he feels of the secret he holds inside.....being

gay.

Cemeteries were his solace. His grandfather's statue was soothing; touching his bronzed hands, comforting.

But Brooklyn Morrison also had more than that growing up. He had the unswerving love of his extended family and his cousin Donnie, where he spent as much of his time as possible. There he got his love, his hugs, his smiles and his continued devotion to God.

Brooklyn Morrison had a deep abiding faith, love and hope in God. A god he hoped would love him for being gay, for wanting to be good and to try do good.

Reading about some of the horrific and significant moments in Brooklyn's life growing up gay..(you will have to find out for yourself), would be enough to shake anyone's faith in God.....even in humanity!

Enter Jed, the love of his life. They build a life together that is tested when they go back to Brooklyn's hometown to help his ailing mother and face old demons....and deal with new ones. Flashbacks, old friends, his mother's verbal abuse continues....but.... also Love within his extended family.....still the Love of God.

This was an very inspiration and poignant story of how a gay boy coped and now gay man continues to have hope, courage and love. How he never took his eyes of the ball....his God...Jed's God...Mauda's God, Donnie's God...etc.

The story was incredible and I found it hard to put down.

Every gay perso who is going through personal problems and adversity should read this book.

Lena♥Ribka says

Audible

I'm still on the fence about this book.

On the one hand I enjoyed the writing and wanted to know what happened next.

On the other hand...there were so many things that personally annoyed me, so that I had partly to struggle to come through the plot.

My main issue was a religion topic. Not that I WASN'T prepared. I had read the blurb and skimmed through some reviews before I picked up this book, but I honestly didn't expect it to be in THIS FORM. I expected rather a big fat secret hidden deeply in the past of our MC that suddenly would be discovered and make his well-ordered life to a living hell. No, that wasn't the case.

It was religion on the daily basis. Let me explain: Brooke returned to his hometown for family reasons. In El Dorado Springs the **church rules the world**. And to such an extent that borders on incredibility and ludicrousness. It seems, the only concern ALL citizens of this small community have in their lives, is to be *good Christians*. I think this phrase was like in every second sentence in the second part of the book. What

century are we living in? I can't imagine a church could have so much power and control over people every day's lives, but I'm not from the USA: Other countries, other customs.

To be both, a good Christian and gay, is difficult, but possible. And Brooke tried to prove it with all his positive power and mood, excellent principles and good intentions. He didn't succeed. What one needed to convince the population of El Dorado Springs was only a single(view spoiler)

I hate the ending. Because of Donnie. Because I didn't understand it. Why? It didn't match with the story-line. Did it teach us (view spoiler)

All in all I found the narrative by Andrew McFerrin okay, but his way to present the old ladies was horrible. Unfortunately there were MANY OLD LADIES in this book. I'd prefer he kept his normal voice for the old women, and didn't try to sound like (an) old witch(es) instead.

All in all, despite my list of issues, I was invested in the story and I found the idea with the shattered door very beautiful and symbolical.

I still hope to find a book by Brandon Witt that will satisfy all my criteria.
The one of the important ones he has already met.

Kaje Harper says

4.5 stars. I've read several books by Brandon Witt, and they have an interesting quality, where at first I feel a little detached, and distant from the narrative. At some point in the first couple of chapters I usually think that it's pretty good, but I'm not getting pulled into the characters and story. And then slowly, almost without noticing it, I get sucked into his characters' minds and lives. This one - The Shattered Door - was like that. It also shares other characteristics I'm coming to expect. There are revelations, and events, good, bad, and in between, that often work out more low-key than I expect, dodging melodrama but delivering emotion with a hit of realism. (Although this story delivers one not-low-key kick in the heart.)

"The Shattered Door" is about Brooke, a man who grew up with an alcoholic and emotionally-abusive mother, in a small Southern town. Brooke left home, studied to become a Youth Minister, but came to the realization that he was never going to pray his gay away. From that point on, we watch Brooke building a life that has purpose and meaning, figuring out whom to trust, rebuilding his relationship with God, and reconnecting with his past. There's a romantic relationship in here, but it is very rarely the main focus of the story. This is about making space in your heart for imperfect people, for a religion that matters but whose institutions may not make room for you, and about finding purpose and peace with things you cannot change. The small town Brooke returns to, and the church within it, are a big part of his growth and self-discovery, (again without huge melodrama), as a man who grew up expecting his faith to be central to his life.

In some ways it reminds me of one gay man's journey through the serenity prayer, with wrong done to him, and good fortune as well. Brooke has to learn when he can make a difference, what he must (or dares to) trust, and what he must find the serenity to let go, even when it cuts him deeply.

Paul says

Coming from another country and being a gay male, where religion does not play a big part within the population, I mean it's literally non-existent for 70-80% of the people, maybe more. The Shattered Door opens a dark portal into the heart of the Bible Belt in the US and gives a frank account of the struggles to grow up there within the LGBT+ community. I can't even fathom that nearly everyone in small country towns attends church but I have a lot of US friends online and this story rings so true to the horrors they dealt with. I will never understand it and nor do I EVER want to, but it was necessary to get the entire meaning of this book across.

It's an excellent novel and I actually despise novels set in this location because they infuriate me but this one caught my attention so I'm glad I read it because it's given me one of the most insightful and what I personally perceived as a rather accurate and commonplace occurrence.

It's also very well written but this is not a nice story so ****TRIGGER WARNINGS**** for a lot of physical and mental abuse. However much I hate this, it was necessary to convey this story correctly. No matter how dark it gets at times I so glad I read, but it has left me feeling cold because it's still happening.

I was intrigued with the inner workings of this book and US Christianity but it really upset me and it's such a detailed description that I felt like it was almost autobiographical in nature and I didn't find anything happy or positive about the story. Don't get me wrong, it's worth the read but it's not for everyone and Brandon Witt really got his point across.

I'd also like to say I mean no offence but from an outsiders perspective it's so distressing and this needs to stop. It kills so many people from suicide to hate crimes. More people need to know and help to put a stop to it.

Scott says

Not usually my cup of tea, but thank god for that. I was looking for a gay male author and came across one with corgis...so I just bought it (my corgi is very influential in my decision making).

While I'm not a religious person, I can feel the love between Jed and Brooke. I'm surprised at how Brooke overcame so many hardships yet kept his faith -- I would have probably given up. That said, I see a little bit of me in Brooke...some of his past resonates with me and memories of mine...his strength and courage are so strong in spite of it all.

Thank you, Brandon, for your persistence in getting this published. I'm sure you are a beautiful person and that shines through in your work. Keep it up.

J. Vaughn says

Fifty pages into this book I thought it was probably going to be a dnf from me, simply because I don't typically like books that are about mundane day-to-day life even if they are as well written, humorous, and insightful as this one. However, the story line progressed in unexpected ways and by page 150 or so my jaw

was on the floor and I was turning pages as fast as I could read.

The sweet shy Christian boy we were introduced to had layers and then some. I like that his story unfolded slowly and that the author took his time developing characters and setting. It's a lovely, bittersweet story that has made me pause to reflect on life and appreciate what I have.

I will definitely read more from Brandon Witt.
