



Laying Ghosts

James Buchanan

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Joe and Kabe must lay the ghosts of the past and bring closure to a family scarred by loss to move forward in their life together.

Some families are haunted by tragedy. Some people are haunted by their pasts. Some men are haunted by who they are. Joe Peterson is haunted by all three.

His parents' return from their mission, combined with a family reunion, forces Joe's kin to deal with his new life: out of the Mormon Church, out of the closet, and living with his lover Kabe.

When a decades-old murder of a child lands on Joe's desk, digging into it dredges up long buried truths and festering secrets about folks Joe thought he knew -- including Kabe. Joe and Kabe must lay the ghosts of the past and bring closure to a family scarred by loss to move forward in their life together.

Laying Ghosts Details

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From Reader Review Laying Ghosts for online ebook

Mandapanda says

4.5 stars. I love these characters and would have enjoyed this book even if it was just to join them in their everyday lives. The sense of place, the deep twang of Joe's voice and the way he and Kabe relate to each other are so inviting and familiar. But the author includes an intriguing cold case that involves Joe's family and an accident that makes him question his sexual relationship with Kabe that turn it into a top-notch story. There were a few typos unfortunately - I don't usually notice them so there must have been a few for me to pick it up. I wonder if Joe and Kabe's story will end there? It did seem to round out the whole series but I wouldn't mind visiting with them one more time. Here's hoping!

Otila says

This is the third book in the Deputy Joe series and my favorite by far. I've said it before and I'll say it again, I love Joe and I love being in Joe's head. Joe is just so lovable, dependable and honorable. Being in his head really lets the reader see the depth of his character and his passion.

Joe is a devout Mormon deputy sheriff in a small mostly Mormon town in Utah. He has been excommunicated from his church, shunned by some of his community and demoted in his job, all for having a relationship with Kabe. Joe has dealt with all of it because Kabe is made for him but now he has to tell his parents, who are coming back to town after a 2 year mission, about all of it and he's having a difficult time with it. They obviously don't take it well. The interaction between Joe and his family and especially his parents is part of what made this book so wonderful. Their different reactions to Joe being gay were very real. I found the scenes between Joe and his parents especially touching. (view spoiler) While dealing with his family he is also trying to solve a decades old murder of a little girl. The case is very personal for Joe and he will uncover secrets that he may not be prepared to deal with.

The best part of this book, and this series, is the relationship between Kabe and Joe. Their love, their want and need for each other is beautiful to watch. **I was desperate to have him... I tasted his mouth, forced my tongue between his lips. Figured heaven felt something close to this and if it didn't, I weren't sure I ever wanted to go.** In this book, they have to deal with some things in Kabe's past and in doing so, finally discuss their D/s relationship. This is something they had never done before and I was glad to see them define it and set boundaries. Their relationship has grown and strengthened throughout this series and I want more because I'm greedy.

He looked up and flashed me one of those soul shattering smiles of his. Life might not be perfect, but it was right fine. I had my family and I had him.

Mostly, I had him. And that meant all the world to me.

Br with Sofia-Thanks for taking this journey with me.

Kaje Harper says

Deputy Joe is one of my favorite characters in M/M, a man with deep convictions of what is right, what is just and fair, a believing Mormon, and yet a man who is gay and a top and into BDSM in a way that he sometimes has trouble reconciling with the rest of his life. And yet Joe doesn't lie to himself (at least not for long), and when pushed to the wall he doesn't lie to others either.

His partner Kabe, for all that he's young, has a similar integrity - the strength to be himself and to know what he needs. He can support Joe when there's trouble, push him when unpalatable truths arise, and keeps Joe safe in exploring what BDSM means between the two of them.

A lot happens in this book, but mostly in terms of past secrets exposed, and present truths faced. There is very little actual action here, compared to the previous books. This one has a different feel - it's about internal reconciliation and family, and figuring out how your life works. I gained a lot of respect for Kabe in this book - for his strength, his self-awareness, and his commitment to Joe. I think at last I see them as true partners with equal weight in the relationship, and I like that. The plot was well done, and although the revelations came thick and fast it didn't feel like overkill, but like one of those clusterfuck times when every time you turn around someone else is in crisis. Those happen, and Joe will only make it through if he can keep his relationship with Kabe strong, and remember what really counts.

This book could round out the series, given where it leaves the two MC's and Joe's extended family. But I will happily read more about these guys, any time.

Rosa, really says

Like this series? Love this series?

[Click here for a sneak peek of *Requiem in Leather: Deputy Joe Book 4*.](#)

Thanks for finding it, Otila!

Lena♥Ribka says

DNF at 64%.

I'm terribly sad, unhappy and upset. I can cry.

Because I love Joe and Kabe.

But I had a

*terrible,

*huge,

*awful,

*unforeseen

problem with this book.

I DIDN'T LIKE IT.

And I WANTED

[illegible]

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BADLY to like it.

NO.

FUCKING.

CHANCE.

Repetitions.

Repetitions

Repetitions.

Sorry. A mystery was RIDICULOUSLY UNREAL.

The rest was.....

Repetitive.

Repetitive.

Repetitive.

I WAS A BIG FAN of the series at the beginning.

BUT.

It took me almost 1 month to read it up to 60% and I don't want to know more.

Sometimes it is very wise to stop in time.

Ami says

I had this book since it was released but only now that I gave a chance to read it. I don't know why -- maybe because it is the latest Deputy Joe and #4 is still in the making?

I love this series -- I think the relationship is solid. They balance each other and Joe truly accepts that Kabe makes him happy. The D/s goes further than the first two books, there's a breath play here as well. I don't completely understand D/s lifestyle, and I think Joe gets worried rings true. I like that Joe and Kabe finally talks about it.

I admit, AGAIN, I have a difficult time to go into Joe's head due to his, uhm, dialect ... it is deliberately written that way, and it *was* not easy for an ESL like me to comprehend. At the same time, after awhile, I just accept it as being part of Joe and it doesn't bother me too much.

I find the dynamic of Joe's family as VERY interesting. While his parents don't easily accept Joe being gay and they still think it's a sin, they don't immediately throw him out and dismiss him as their son. They still talk to Joe about it and they still think of him as family member. I find that as good and realistic. I'm a bit sad with Joe's mom having signs of Alzheimer ... although that scene where she calls Kabe as "*Babe*" is kinda fun :).

The mystery is good -- though it being a cold case makes it less intense compared to if it being current mystery. But I'm glad that Joe finds closure about what really happens and I think it's good for the family.

All in all, a great sequel to the series and I will definitely be there for the next adventure of Joe and his Kabe.

Debra says

My favorite of the series so far. Joe and Kabe are solidly together when this one starts. Joe is still on desk duty logging in cold cases, although he is mostly recovered from his accident. Kabe is fully moved in and moving forward with his EMT/fire training while trying to get early release from his probation.

A lot happens in the book. Again, Joe and Kabe balance each other out so well. The BDSM relationship has gotten quite intense and more hard core. After a particular incident though, Joe starts wonder if it has gone too far. More of Kabe's background is revealed and we get to meet Joe's entire family as his parents return from their mission. The mystery in this book is also personal, as Joe looks into the 30 year old drowning death of his sister.

I was glad to finally have more insight into Kabe. His character really came into his own in this story and solidified his place as an equal partner to Joe.

My only real complaint about this one is poor editing. There were a lot of glaring grammatical errors/typos.

Sofia says

5 star rating for the series as a whole.

Acceptance and Love that's what this book was about to me and the message was strong and powerful.

I loved this third dose of Joe and Kabe, love seeing them work out their relationship and just being there for each other. Throughout the series, Joe has noted the way Kabe is different, loving him as he is, not inspite of the differences but because of them, because he is Kabe.

The mystery in this one is one of the best in the series and woven as it was with Joe's life, it gave us deeper understanding of him and his family.

This week I was discussing the fact that I use books (fiction) as a means of escape from real life and how I need that break from life to be able to continue. But hey, real life decided that that was not ok and in this book, it tapped me on the shoulder and said **HOWDY**. This book has pushed so many of my triggers that I feel like I am lighting up like a Christmas tree. Do I hate this book for doing this to me, for walking with me for a bit along my road. Hmm thinking about it, I would have to admit, that no, I do not hate it. I did consider stopping reading it at one point but I did not, I continued reading it. It is a testament to Buchanan's sensitive writing and my love for Joe and Kabe that I finished the book. And I am so **GLAD** that I did.

Navajo Lake Dixie National Forest Utah

I read a few books with club BDSM which left me more perplexed than ever. Buchanan's treatment of this kink is so different from these, it has given me glimmerings of understanding. I still say it is definitely not my kink, even reading wise, but I fully accept and want Joe and Kabe to be as they are. That is totally OK by me and I am more than willing to read more about them.

Through this series I've become a fan of the author and I wish James Buchanan all the best things in this world and of course happy Joe and Kabe writing times.

BR with Otila (thanks for sharing this with me)

Feliz says

When we last meet Joe in *Spin Out*, he's restricted to desk duty in the aftermath of the professional troubles his relationship with an ex-con cast him into and because he's still recovering from a car accident. Instead of solving crimes, his job is now entering cold cases into a database, and this is how he comes across the decades-old unsolved death of a little girl. A case that Joe quickly takes personal for a variety of reasons, and he starts to investigate it. Even though he suspects he might find out more than he ever wanted to know...

However, Joe's family issues almost threaten to overwhelm his professional ones, his family's tendency to keep things under wrap only adding to the problem. Half-revealed family secrets of the past combine with present tragedy to a heavy burden not only for Joe, but also for his siblings. Add to that the upcoming family reunion in honor of the return of Joe's parents from their mission, where Joe's new life—expelled from his church, in an openly gay relationship with a former criminal—will be scrutinized, judged and gossiped about by all of his large extended family, and Joe's cross is almost heavier than he can bear. Thankfully he has Kabe by his side to help him deal with his relatives' reactions and with sorrow old and new.

Meanwhile, Kabe has found a job with a forest fire fighter unit, a duty that keeps him and Joe apart for lengthy periods of time. All the more passionate are they when they are together, exploring what Joe's only just starting to recognize is an informal D/s relationship. One night Joe gets carried away into doing something that actually might harm Kabe, scaring himself half to death. In addition to that, Joe learns something from Kabe's past that makes him question the very nature of their relationship. However, true to form, once again it doesn't occur to Joe to TALK to Kabe about his misgivings, he merely goes into avoid-and-protect-mode—until Kabe corners him. But instead of tearing them apart, working through the resulting conflict together makes them come out on the other side stronger than they ever were, as individuals and as a couple. It raised them to a new level of intimacy, and not only in regard to the sex.

From all three Deputy Joe books I liked this one best so far. There's a wonderful balance of mystery and romance in this book; the case of the dead child is as integral to Joe's character growth as the romantic relationship is. Speaking of which, Kabe also matures visibly over the course of this story (though he thankfully keeps some of his daredevil traits—I'd have missed them!) Joe and Kabe make so much sense as a couple, they complement each other so well. To their relationship, D/s isn't "only" a kink they share, it's natural, integral, their respective roles deeply ingrained into their personalities, even though they are equals in everyday life. Actually, they can be equal partners for a big part thanks to the outlet they have in their erotic communion. I found this part incredibly well done, and at the same time, very educative on what D/s is supposed to be about.

What makes all three books in the series really outstanding for me is Joe's narrative voice. Right from the beginning, it captivated me with its wry, factual tone, following through on that not only in the dialogue, but also in the narrative. As a non-native speaker and as someone who has never been to Utah I wouldn't venture to judge the authenticity of Joe's manner of speaking, but to me, his voice sounded genuine and realistic. I felt as if I was listening to him tell the story rather than reading it, and this made for a very intense reading

experience.

My only complaint with this book was that it went on and on about Joe's family tragedy, which had some parts of the story dragging a bit. I get that this was in the forefront of Joe's mind, and since he's the first person POV narrator, he'd think himself into circles sometimes, and it fit his personality, but still... those issues were few and far between though.

There's another matter here, which is editing. Recently, the books I read tended to be largely free of typos or glaring grammar errors, but in this book, there were too many of either to be overlooked, which was really too bad.

To sum it up, I can only warmly recommend this newest addition to the Deputy Joe series, as well as the series as a whole. A winsome narrator, a wonderful romance (not to forget the seriously hot explicit scenes!), a vivid and scenic setting, realistic conflict, well-wrought secondary characters, and on top of all this, a suspenseful mystery in every book make this series a must-read.

review originally written for www.reviewsbyjessewave.com

Bitchie says

I just love Joe and Kabe! I was also very surprised by how much I loved Joe's family. I was expecting his coming out to be a big huge thing, and in a way it was, but in the end, his family loved him anyway, and I just love it when that happens.

Emma Sea says

Can anyone confirm that IRL there are places where grated carrot in jello counts as a salad?

Jess Candela says

Deputy Joe is one of my favorite m/m characters, so I was delighted for an opportunity to spend more time with him (thanks, MandyM!). I loved this book, but it was my least favorite of the three. Granted, that's a bit like saying the nougat is my least favorite chocolate in the box.

But unlike the first two books, this one didn't grab me immediately and make itself impossible to put down. I think that was, in part, because the editing was terrible. Joe speaks in dialect, which takes a little getting used to, but very quickly became invisible to me in the first two books; it was just part of Joe. But because there were so many extra words, misspelled words, and typos littering this book, I never quite got into the groove of Joe's voice because I kept getting distracted: is this Joe or an error? What about this one? Did he mean to say that, or was that another error?

I think this may be the worst-edited book I've seen published by MLR. I've read worse from other publishers, so I guess this isn't that bad in the overall scheme of things. But it is disappointing when I expect better from them, and especially when it's a favorite author and eagerly-awaited book.

It was an interesting plot, and wonderful to see more of the developing relationship between Joe and Kabe, as well as see Joe learning how to live "out" among family and friends. But somehow, this story lacked the sense of urgency the first two had, though it did eventually reach a point where I couldn't put it down until I finished it.

I loved it, and I would love to read more Deputy Joe books, but overall I felt a little disappointed because - unlike the second book - this one didn't quite live up to the high expectations I had for it. If there is another - and I really hope there will be - I hope it gets the editing it deserves. The shoddy editing almost made this excellent book a travesty. Mind you, the story felt complete enough as is. The only reason I want another is because I love Deputy Joe and want to spend more time in his head!

Elena says

[Joe coming out to his

Jewel says

I think that *Laying Ghosts* is my favorite novel of this series yet. We learn a ton of background on both Joe and Kabe.

In this novel, Joe and Kabe are pretty solid. They're living together and playing hard, and though Joe ends up going further than his comfort level would normally allow, he and Kabe are able to work through Joe's discomfort. They really feel committed to each other and that is very important to me with a series that features the same couple in every book.

In *Laying Ghosts*, Joe's parents get home from Russia, and Joe is faced with telling them about his relationship with Kabe. As one can pretty well predict, they didn't take the news well, but they do come to some level of acceptance, even if they don't understand. Not all of Joe's family is so generous, however. His brother Jim is a douche-nozzle. Jim's wife, too.

At the same time, Joe finds an old case in the cold case files that has to do with the death of one of his sister's that happened when he was a baby. There are so many secrets in his family and in his town, it's a wonder anyone really knows what's going on. But Joe is who he is and he can't just let a mystery go unsolved.

And Kabe is petitioning to end his probation early. His relationship with Joe is still a risk to Joe's career, but neither of them are giving up. Kabe has come a long way in the past year and he's in a good and stable place. And considering some of the things we do learn about his past, I'd say that's a damn good thing. I could not imagine being happy living in Utah, but as things have settled down for both Kabe and Joe, I think they are both quite happy.

I'm enjoying this series quite a lot, which considering the religious aspect, kind of surprises me a bit. But hey, I'll take it.

Elizabetta says

At this point, I feel like I've gotten to know Joe pretty well and I like him a lot, am happy to be visiting with him again. He's still recovering from the drama in book two, still working to sort his career out. Even though it's been a while, it's easy to fall back into Joe's world.

Whoo-baby, the family drama rears it's sometimes ugly head as Joe's parents return from their mission in China and his five (six??) siblings descend en masse. How to come out, where to come out, when to come out. It is tricky stuff, there in the heart of the Mormon.

Joe is a good guy, a straight shooter (so to speak) who just wants to do his job and get some peace with a capital P. So he can boink his beautiful boy, Kabe. But Kabe has been harboring secrets of his own about his past that threaten their bliss. The sex is still just as hot off the page, yeah, but there is an edge to it now. And then... along comes a pretty good mystery to add to all the fracas. While Joe is on a sort of job probation, the dreaded desk work, he is set to filing and clearing up old unsolved cases. One such 'cold case' has huge implications for Joe's family. It only adds to his strained relations with parents and siblings... it opens up a lot of old hurts as well.

This is, again, from Joe's POV and there is a lot of rumination going on. We are privy to his every colorful inner musing. Things like:

“As he talked I felt my muscles wind up around my bones until they thrummed so tight I thought they may snap me clean in half.”

And:

“...this drilled that cold snake of fear so deep in my soul I didn't think I'd ever get the taint of it out.”

Or:

“Winter hit inside my chest and blew frost into my brain... That frozen feeling exploded out of my chest and swept through my veins.”

Ha! I love it. Cool and collected on the outside, serious feeeeelzz on the inside. The author has built a character that can carry this off.

Quibbles... there is much repeated and extraneous information sprinkled between dialogue and musings that drags things out and the pacing falters at times, especially towards the end. The author has to trust that we know Joe well enough not to have to be told every last thing in his head. Also, Kabe... he is a confusing mixture of wide-eyed, young brat who likes to throw 'dude' around a lot, ***and*** older-than-his age wisdom-giver. Sexually, he's on fire and reckless, a challenge for Joe who's only kink know-how is what he can cull from the 'net. Delicious for us but Joe has a lot of catching up to do. I like Kabe, think he's good for Joe, but don't feel that cozy with him.

For me, this is all about Joe... returning to this sharp, closed-down guy who is finally coming into his own: recognizing his leadership ability, making peace with his sexual orientation and fighting for his love. He can quietly open up a whole can of whoop-ass on a case, proving himself once again. The murder mystery is woven in well with all the family drama and gives insight to it. Well done.

