



## **The Last Bastion of the Living**

*Rhiannon Frater*

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As long as the undead hordes of the Inferi Scourge howl outside the dying city, the last remaining humans struggle to survive inside The Bastion. Vanguard Maria Martinez has lived her entire life within the towering walls. Her only refuge from the overcrowded streets, rolling blackouts, and food shortages is in the arms of Officer Dwayne Reichardt. Then Maria is summoned to meet with a mysterious representative from the Science Warfare Division and is offered the opportunity to finally destroy the Inferi Scourge and reclaim the land and resources in the valley beyond the wall. If she succeeds, the city may be saved.

But if she fails, humanity faces extinction...

## **The Last Bastion of the Living Details**

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Author : Rhiannon Frater

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Genre : Horror, Zombies, Apocalyptic, Post Apocalyptic, Science Fiction, Dystopia



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## From Reader Review The Last Bastion of the Living for online ebook

### Rhiannon Frater says

This is my second favorite book I have ever written. Love it!

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### Lori says

I finished this last night. I am still speechless. This book was supreme awesomesauce. When I am being judged at the pearly gates and my zombie loving god (he's my god, don't judge) asks me what my favorite zombie novel was. The Last Bastion of the Living would HAVE to be my answer. I'm not sure how I feel about that. It feels traitorous to say that. I LOVE so many other zombie novels. I feel like I am downgrading them or betraying them. It has nothing to do with that. Rhiannon Frater literally just blew this shit out the water though guys! You cannot compare this to other zombie novels. It is in a league of its own. It was even leaps and bounds more awesome than her ATWD series. Note I did not say better. The two cannot be compared.

The Good:

The writing was perfection. You are IN this story. I would look up and get culture shock when I looked around and saw MY beautiful Maria sleeping in the bed next to me.

Maria Martinez was just the right mixture of kickass warrior and real girl. Sometimes female characters are just too badass to be believable.

The dystopia was also completely realistic. I loved it. These people aren't thriving. They aren't even surviving.

The villains are not one dimensional. They are a mixture of good and bad. You see their motivations for their devious ways. (Well some of them)

The zombies aren't really zombies in the traditional sense. Rhiannon created a whole new world.

EVERYTHING is new.

The not so good:

This is a stand alone novel. Once you finish it. You are finished. Rhiannon has stated more than once she is DONE with this world. She leaves this future in our hands to imagine what happens next. I'm going to be honest. I don't have even a tenth of her imagination. My musings WILL fall flat. I want MORE but I have to be happy with what I have.

There is one story line about a cult that was introduced but nothing happened with it. We never find out if they are still around. I guess this is one of the things she left up to our imaginations.

visit <http://contagiousreads.blogspot.com> for more reviews and more of my thoughts on this book.

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### Sh3llraiser (grumpybookgrrrl) says

#### Buddy read with the MacHalo group for Zombiefest July!

**DNF 30%.** I'm giving up. This is not really even a zombie book. They are just a vague background idea up

to the point I stopped reading. It's mainly about a secret government type faction experimenting on the lead character. But not even in an interesting way. She's a special snowflake and able to be experimented on with a zombie vaccine, more or less.

I can't get into any of the other characters. They are all meh to me. I tried.

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### **Cathryn says**

2 stars. BR with the lovely MacHalo Ladies

The premise of this book is really interesting but the execution was lacking. There was so much setup that I almost DNFd this at about 50%. This was a BR and I think almost everyone else did just that. I probably should have as well but there was so much hinting about a betrayal that I just had to know what was going to happen. Once you got to the action it picked up a bit but then the plot got really twisty and I just didn't care anymore.

Then the ending was a little bit all over the place. I've read this author's other zombie series and really enjoyed it so I'm a little surprised that this turned out to be a dud for me.

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### **Glass says**

Review on my blog Ja ?itam, a ti?

We've been talking a lot about Rhiannon Frater and her books last month - all of that was just warm up for today: day 7 of The Last Bastion of the Living Blog Tour. You can win ebook of this novel and if you check out other blog tour stops, you'll see there are few more goodies waiting just for you - full schedule is here.

I have to say that I never liked zombies, I do not watch Walking Dead and this is the first Rhiannon Frater novel that I've read. But... I think I'm getting there. The Last Bastion of the Living is the best indie novel I've had in my hands so far. It's mix of everything - science fiction, dystopia, urban fantasy. You won't be overelmed with too much scientifical explanations or military terms. Rhiannon used everything with measure, just enough to suck you into that world and make it look believable.

This is book for grown ups. What does that mean and why didn't I use term "adult"? Well, it seems that adult novel lot of people equals with erotica nowadays. The Last Bastion of the Living most definitely is not erotica and, thank you God, it is not pathetic romance with creatures from the dark for horny teens. There are emotions, zombies, fighting, bad and good guys, but Rhiannon Frater didn't write this book thinking: "Hey, let's put out there something with tortured hero and damsel in distress and bunch of bad guys who want to destroy the world because main characters are in luv!" No! We have world that hangs by its threads and forty people who are tricked into saving it although they'd do that even if they knew all the facts. This would've been a great movie!

What I liked the best? Girl power! Maria Martinez is kick-ass heroine with her ups and downs, strong

character and mind of her own. I was so hyped after reading this - my own inner bad girl wanted to kick some butt. I knew from first description that author probably used Michelle Rodrigues as inspiration and I've read here that I was right!

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### **Michelle, the Bookshelf Stalker Queen of the Undead says**

Blog Tour- Badass Book Reviews- June 16th

Really enjoyed it!

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### **Patricia says**

What happens when you throw together a little bit of this:

And this:

?

That's right. You get The Last Bastion of the Living. ~~Okay there are no vampires or lycans but both Kate and the book's cover model dons a spandex suit.~~ And man is our heroine one BADASS chick. Congrats Ms Frater, you have just gained a new fan.

The Last Bastion of the Living was everything I expected and more. After reading Courtney Summers' This is Not a Test, which, by the way, was depressing as hell (but it was still good), I was mentally drained by the whole its-the-end-of-the-world hopeless feeling that so often comes with undeads. With that in mind, I was rather reluctant to start on this book.

### **BOY WAS I GLAD I DID.**

Meet Maria Martinez, the story's female lead. After the failure of the last attempt to seal the valley gate and feeling trapped living within the city walls, Maria longed for a life out in the open. However, this was far from possible due to the Inferi Scourge "Scrags" (undead) that surrounded the city when the gate failed. So naturally, when she was given the chance to eliminate the Scrags once and for all, she jumped at the opportunity, only to find out later that things are not as simple as they seemed.

I loved the sense of duty that Maria possessed and defined her. Even though she knew of the risks involved in the plans to eliminate the Scrags, nonetheless, she persisted in participating in order to free what's left of humanity. She's loyal, honest, and tough when she needed to be, even when she was (view spoiler) What can I say? She's just plain awesome.

The story's other lead (and Maria's love interest), Dwayne, is just about as wonderful. Despite being 25 years her senior, the relationship between Maria and Dwayne never felt weird. They truly cared and trusted each other. When things turn bad, each provided the support their better half needed. Dwayne never tried to control Maria as with so many other alpha male that frequently appeared in books these days. Instead, he decided to assist her from the sidelines even though the fact that she was in constant danger pained him. He RESPECTED her decision. THIS IS WHAT I CALL TRUE LOVE PEOPLE. I'm so glad that they (view spoiler).

Also, there was no love triangle! \*Yay\*

Reading *The Last Bastion of the Living* was a breeze. There wasn't a single moment in which I was bored by the plot. Rather, I should say I was flipping through the pages fervently in my haste to find out what came next. The plot thickens and was lined with several twists and turns I never saw coming. The writing was very well done, though I did spot a couple of errors. But it was nothing major. Oh and did I mention how much I adore stand-alones? No? Well, I do. *The Last Bastion of the Living* is *exactly* why.

And finally, to Rhiannon Frater:

GOSH THAT ENDING.

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### **Regina says**

Win an ebook copy of this book here: <http://badassbookreviews.com/last-bas...>

I am reluctant to say anything about this book lest I spoil it for future readers. Ms. Frater has written an amazing story here and the building blocks of the story are so important, I just don't want to ruin it for anyone. Each little place slides in place as a new piece of knowledge for the reader -- you gotta learn it as you go. *The Last Bastion* is a zombie story and a dystopia story unlike any I have read. Because it is set in the future, 100 years after the fall of civilization the feel of the book is very different than say the *Walking Dead* or *As the World Dies*. Humanity is in a routine, they believe they know what to expect and they are trying to preserve the last hope of surviving. There are futuristic gadgets throughout the story the are just fun (wristlets anyone?); these gadgets add to the context and feel. But not forgotten are the dirty realities of a dying society -- lack of food, inconsistent infrastructure and loss of hope.

I love Ms. Frater's books for her original concepts and unique characters and *Last Bastion* is no exception. The heroine, Maria, is not perfect. None of Ms. Frater's characters ever are but they are realistic. I can imagine Maria existing in some sort of alternate fictional reality with all of her scars and lost dreams. Going in to this book, despite having read the blurb and Ms. Frater's warnings or promises that this was not in the same world as *As the World Dies*, I have to admit that I did expect the zombies to be like, well every other zombie I have met in the fictional world. Well, I was wrong. How these zombies came to be, how they act, what they need and how society fell is unique. I love postapocalyptic fiction, but I never truly buy into the why and how of the societal collapse. It makes sense in *The Last Bastion*. Society doesn't collapse

immediately, but over time and some structure still remains.

I can't say anymore! Just know that if you read this book you get some dystopia fun, a tiny bit of romance (not explicit), action scenes and a new concept of zombies. It is not a short book, it is a meaty book with a gradual build. And it is fun. The book reads like a stand alone, but if another book ever was written in this world I would definitely be back for more.

To read this review and more like it check out: [www.badassbookreviews.com](http://www.badassbookreviews.com)

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### **Bonnie says**

My rating: 4.5 of 5 stars

After thoroughly enjoying the author's 'As the World Dies' trilogy which was full of super awesome and terribly gruesome zombies, I was all on board for more. The Last Bastion of the Living completely knocked it out of the park for me. Set in a future completely changed and desolate, the zombies have destroyed any chance of survival for the last known group of people on Earth. Grasping at straws, the government makes one last desperate attempt to reclaim the surrounding lands and to solidify the livelihood of all.

Much like her 'As the World Dies' trilogy, Rhiannon never lacks for vivid and highly likable characters and an exciting storyline to boot. The main character, Maria, is an extremely strong and independent woman and she can kick some serious ass too. The story also switches up point-of-view with Maria's boyfriend Dwayne who was also a well written character. One thing that I have to make note of is the relationship between Maria and Dwayne: an incredibly realistic relationship; something that I think is highly lacking in fiction novels these days. The strength of their bond was palpable in addition to how much they loved each other. It was a fabulous addition to the story but didn't overpower the actual storyline in any way.

And speaking of the storyline... I cannot remember the last time I was reading a book and it created such vivid imagery in my mind to the point where it was as if I was watching a movie reel playing in my head. And what a badass movie it was! The writing didn't have the feel of a screenplay thankfully, but I nonetheless could definitely see a movie being made from this story.

Only disappointment was the realization that this was a stand-alone novel so the story was over! I could definitely see potential paths that future installments could go with to make it a series but then again there was something satisfying about reading the story in its entirety and being done with it without having to wait for future installments. Stand-alone novels seem to be quite rare these days and I read far too many series so this was a nice change.

With a surprisingly original and refreshing take on the normal zombie tale this was a highly enjoyable thrill ride. Zombie lovers need not miss out on this gem.

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### **Giselle says**

#### **Pre-review that I will leave here because I think it's epic**

Holy shit! This. Was. Incredibly. Insane. Rhiannon really outdid herself with this one. It's fascinating, definitely unique, and completely blew my mind.

I won't write a full review now. I'll wait til I read the finished product but I can promise you this is absolutely brilliant and like nothing you've read before. She takes zombies to a whole new, unimaginable level, adds in some romance, intrigue, and - as usual - excellent characters! GAH. My god I can't even begin to tell you how much I LOVED it. Do you hear me? **THIS IS FUCKING AMAZING.**

This... THIS is why I love to read. I breathe for books like this.

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### Actual review

Rhiannon and me, it was love at first sight. Those tiny fingers. It was terrifying, it was heartbreak, there were zombies - I was hers. I was told of an upcoming zombie novel she was writing: In my glass case of emotion, I was ecstatic, squealing with joy; my worship was born. Yes I know, the world I've come to know in *As the World Dies* has come to a close, but it's ok, because this completely new futuristic world, where zombies have evolved to fantastically creative proportions, is absolutely mind-blowing.

In all seriousness, I've come to not only expect, but to look forward to the exceptional characters who consistently breathe life, soul, and heart into Rhiannon's novels. *The Last Bastion of the Living* introduces us to Maria: a fierce, capable, transcendent protagonist who is perfectly flawed with fears and uncertainties that make her genuine. She's incredibly easy to root for and basically becomes a friend, someone you grow to care about throughout the story. Maria's not alone at the core of this book, either, we also have Dwayne; sweet, caring Dwayne is Maria's rock, as she is his. Their romance, kept secret because of their rank, is the perpetual undertone of the story. The relationship between them is established from the start and you can easily feel their connection. They complete each other.

Combining romance and terror is a great feat that is done impeccably in this novel. While Dwayne's perspective has me heartbroken and distressed, Maria's is filled with trepidation and horror. It's very interesting to get both sides of the story. Especially when we've got so much skepticism towards the whole project. It's hard to trust anybody in this game. You imagine everything to take a certain direction, when suddenly, you're staggering sideways trying to grasp what is happening. It's such a creative take on zombies that it becomes incredibly fascinating and almost impossible to predict what's in store for Maria. It boggled my mind a few times, leaving me flabbergasted. For this reason I can't say very much else about the plot. But I will mention that the ending is outstanding. It's brimming with endless possibilities that had me sitting there contemplating it for hours. Really, just perfect.

For a zombie novel, I was surprised at how much the setting blew me away. The desolate, overpopulated city; the unstoppable, innumerable zombies beyond the gate; but what really took my breath away, was the immense potential of the valley that they once had, and what has become their only hope. I literally got shivers during a certain monumental scene near the middle, where you know something life changing is happening. Honestly, this is why I've become such a big fan of Rhiannon's writing. The emotions from elation to despair are so powerful, they resonates through these pages and they reach you. And you know what? This reminds me of why I love to read. I do admit to being a picky reader; I often find myself going through what seems to be an endless supply of mediocre books, but it is completely worth it when I find a diamond in the rough like this. A book that makes me feel, that makes me think, and wonder, and ponder, and hope, and smile, and cry. Did I ever expect this from a zombie novel? No freaking way! Well... there you have it!

Unique, potent, unnerving, and full of action, The Last Bastion of the Living will leave readers in a daze. It's so hard! When you love a book this much, it's so hard to put it into words. And almost impossible to do it justice. So I will leave it at this.

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For more of my reviews, visit my blog at Xpresso Reads

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### **Carol. says**

I blame it on Trudi.

I started off rather indifferently, forcing myself through the opening scene of a troop of young recruits heading into battle against the living dead, otherwise known as the Inferi Scrouge. It's a powerful visual image (which is why it is used in combat movies) but there isn't enough emotional investment, and when next scene opens a year later, it causes mental whiplash. Maria, the lead we followed into combat, is waking up in bed with one of the commanders of the assault. The cheerful domesticity is no doubt meant to contrast with the earlier bloody battle, as well as a set point for 'happy' against the troubles to come (standard in the disaster genre). As an aside, Maria comes from a Dominican/Puerto Rican heritage which seems to *not matter at all* for the plot. Kudos, Frater.

As the story progressed, I was thankful *someone* seems to have hired a fabulous editor, as the glaring immaturity of the writing in her "As the World Dies" series was a serious barrier to enjoyment. However, while her writing has greatly improved, some Fraterisms still snuck through:

--"The large, long rectangular guns perched on the city wall were boxy in appearance due to the many barrels packed on top of each other."

--"Blood, bone and viscera poured onto the dry soil."

--"Blackness surged up to claim her, and she fought not to drown in it. Pulling herself onto her elbows, her body felt numb and her helmet was gone."

--"A smile flitted across his lips."

--"Glancing back, she saw Dwayne heading in the opposite direction."

I kind of liked it, though--my eyes haven't gotten enough exercise lately and needed some rolling action. Frater's still on a mission to avoid the word 'said' during dialogue, no matter how convoluted the result. In chapter one, for instance, Maria and the Commander muttered, yawned, answered, teased, promised, vowed, sighed, reminded, exhaled, protested, decided, and whispered. It feels forced enough that I find myself longing Charlie Huston's style in Joe Pitt, notable for a lack of dialogue markers.

Chapter one didn't pull me in either; it mostly provided personal events in the past year while building a romance worthy *twu luv*. Elements of a bossy family, infertility issues, and keeping the relationship secret all began to sound a lot more like modern chick-lit than I hope for with my zombie books, but Trudi suggested perseverance. Of course, she was right.

The story changed again, becoming a transformative, soldier-team-against-all-odds with a zombie twist I absolutely did not see coming. Frater deserves applause just for that idea. The story had me interested until halfway through (literally, per Kindle) where it transformed again, turning into a conspiracy story. While the conspiracy was mildly interesting, the feeling that Frater might have over-reached herself started to nag. It solidified as the conspiracy became more complicated: (view spoiler). Too much, too much. Frater isn't

China Mieville and she brought in more concepts than she could adequately deal with.

In regards to world building, I remained annoyed with the advanced technology civilization encountering the zombie apocalypse. There's some things I'm able to overlook, but when Frater drew attention to the technology or societal problems like electrical shortages, I was drawn out of the story and into the logistical puzzle of the society (view spoiler) Ultimately, the society just didn't make sense to me and it started to feel like it was created strictly as a backdrop for plot points. Still, damn if Frater didn't grab me with her zombie plot twist and leave my technological and societal issues in the dust, at least for a little while.

However, one remarkable idea and interest in half a book with noticeable world and language issues isn't enough to push that third star to shine. Two and a half stars.

Spoilery thoughts:

(view spoiler)

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Cross posted at <http://clsiewert.wordpress.com/2013/0...>

### **Damali says**

The last surviving city of the zombie apocalypse is running out of resources, and is very close to being infiltrated by the zombies that wait outside their walls day and night. Maria is selected to go on a secret mission that, if it works, will give them more access to vital resources. But the government doesn't tell her everything, and she soon finds herself dealing with more than she bargained for.

I did like the gadgets and the setting and, in theory, I should like this type of dystopia. I love shows like Battlestar, Space: Above and Beyond, etc, shows that have the military and the fighting, but those shows also have the personal stories to draw me in. While there were personal struggles in this, it didn't affect me, as easily as a TV show would. But I did enjoy it, and I am still a Rhiannon Frater fan.

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### **Maja (The Nocturnal Library) says**

**4.5 stars**

I wasn't even the least bit surprised by how much I enjoyed *The Last Bastion of the Living*. Rhiannon Frater is well known for being a horror writer par excellence, and she only confirmed her status with this futuristic zombie novel. Well, she did a bit more than that: she outdid herself and surpassed all my expectations by far.

Vanguard Maria Martinez is an officer of the constabulary. Although young, she's already a decorated war hero with a very strong sense of duty. Her job is to guard the wall that separates the living from the dead – the Bastion from the zombie-infested lands – but the war against the Inferi Scourge, i.e. the zombies, has long ago been lost. The last city, last Bastion, is fighting for mere survival, nothing more. Maria doesn't remember a world without the scrags, but when she is called to lead a desperate mission, she sees it as her duty to accept.

Castellan Dwayne Reichardt is Maria's boyfriend, twenty five years her senior. They keep their relationship a secret for several valid reasons, but their love is strong and true. He is there to support Maria every step of the way, and he never hesitates to bend a few rules if that's what it takes to keep her safe. Frater did something not many authors do: she wrote a solid relationship that was already established at the beginning of the novel and that remained a warm, comforting presence throughout. This story did **not** need relationship angst – it needed both Maria and Dwayne, confident in their love and united against their enemies. Everything about them was perfectly realistic and even though they were physically apart most of the time, their love kept softening the edges of this story.

*The Last Bastion of the Living* is told both from Maria's and Dwayne's third person points of view, and both perspectives were needed to understand the full extent of their troubles. Frater is a fabulous storyteller, one who knows how to build up tension to an almost unbearable level, and *The Last Bastion* is her most mature work to date, unpredictable and fascinating.

Kristin Allison narrated this audiobook and I thought she did a stunning job. Her voice is calm, measured and mature-sounding, perfect for a fierce soldier like Maria. She narrated the action scenes in that same tranquil manner, which, instead of making them seem dull, increased the creepiness and the tension. She was an excellent choice for a book like *The Last Bastion* and I won't hesitate to buy something narrated by her in the future.

As for Rhiannon Frater and I, our love story is only just beginning. She'll keep writing, I'll keep reading and we'll both live happily ever after.

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### **Erica Ravenclaw says**

3.5 stars, bitches! Lets do this.

I finished this book somewhere around 2 am last night, and as always I had brilliant points that I planned on mentioning in my review mulling around in my mind. Typically, I would then get up and maybe jot a few

notes but instead I obnoxiously tossed and turned and sighed heavily. I did this to casually wake my husband so I could get some snuggles cause I was freaked the fuck out. I don't remember *any* of my brilliant ideas.

I went into this book entirely blind, and struggled in the beginning with a touch of disconnect, I felt a little like I was dropped in the middle of something that I *should* already understand but was bumbling behind the MC Maria trying to keep up. Lucky for me, I enjoy that style of writing. I'm openly not a fan of the information dump that all too many authors are fond of and rather enjoy the learn as you go model of introducing a new world. However I probably should have read at least the description.

We find ourselves being dropped on the battle field in the valley outside of a walled city, entirely infused with creatures dubbed the Inferi Scourge.

*Wait, hold up the what? Scrooge? Ebenezer? No no, brain, no. Skerj. SKERJ. Say it with me, ssskeeeeeeeerj.*

Perhaps I can address my biggest gripe with this otherwise fantastic read: the language! It's so outside the vernacular that I was constantly pulled out of the story with a "what" moment. Almost always this is a wonderful aspect of any read, it's one of the reasons that book enthusiasts have such a diverse and interesting vocabulary. As a fast reader it felt a tad jarring to consistently pause to reread sentences that didn't seem to fit. It almost gave the feeling of being lost in translation. There was also a lot of back and forth with the character names and their military titles, at some points it was their first or last name, others was their title, and yet others was some combination of the two and I found a bit frustrating.

We are then given an opportunity to see the inner workings of the city and what life looks like 100 years in the future after the apocalypse. There seemed to be a number of contradictory elements between resources vs. technology, at some point early on I decided not to over analyze this and simply take the world we were in at face value. Had I lingered too long on those contrasting elements I feel I would have disconnected from the plot entirely, and in retrospect I'm glad I chose to plow forward. Somewhere near the halfway point the author propelled the reader from a place confusion and a bit of distrust into complete emotional turmoil and I did not see it coming. The second half of this book is fantastic, enthralling and heart pounding, I was completely won over.

There are some exceptions to this, (view spoiler)

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Overall, I actually really loved this book but I did find some issues along the way hard to overlook. Even the times I had a bit of WTF going on, I still couldn't stop reading. Maria is a badass, your heart will pound and you will even be able to like Dwayne despite his horrendous name.

**Felicia A says**

YAYYYYYYYYYYYYYY! Another editing project is now a published book! Now available, Last Bastion of the Living, another epic tome by Rhiannon Frater. LOVED this book.

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