



Between Sinners and Saints

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Levi Binder is a Miami bartender who cares about only two things: sex and surfing. Ostracized by his Mormon family for his homosexuality, Levi is determined to live his life his own way, but everything changes when he meets massage therapist Jaime Marshall.

Jaime is used to being alone. Haunted by the horrors of his past, his only friend is his faithful dog, Dolly. He has no idea how to handle somebody as gorgeous and vibrant as Levi.

Complete opposites on the surface, Levi and Jaime both long for something that they can only find together. Through love and the therapeutic power of touch, they'll find a way to heal each other, and they'll learn to live as sinners in a family of saints.

Between Sinners and Saints Details

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From Reader Review Between Sinners and Saints for online ebook

Gigi says

This was my second read and I **LOVED** it all over again. I never wrote a review the first time, so here is a quick review for the second read:

Seriously? If there is anyone out there that *hasn't* read this, **STOP EVERYTHING RIGHT NOW.**

Just stop. Pick up this hurt/healing/comfort gem and start it **RIGHT**. The. Fuck. Now.

I don't know what else to say that hasn't been said. One damaged "broken" character, another recently redeemed, strong, emotionally supportive character.

Perfection.

Ingie says

4 Stars for a very nice and tender story about life, family, acceptance, fear, attraction, the wounds of abuse and to love unconditionally

This was another very fine and sweet story from Ms. Sexton ~ she is becoming a new favorite. I really like her a bit more diverse and somewhat damaged characters, they are so much more than just two MC in a love story. They make my heart sore and I almost hit a knot in myself in my desire for their happiness and HEA.

Levi's and Jamie's story is wonderfully beautiful, but also so difficult. I knew immediately that this would be an enjoyable and entertaining read. A promiscuous surfing bartender and a shy and single masseur is a promising start. What I probably didn't understand was that this would be so much more than another hot M/M romance. Daring to go with a seducer to the beach to surf, or to say no to willing sexy men, or to touch and be touched is a challenge and sometimes requires courage. Unexpected twists and heartbreak to follow, yes my tears flowed actually a few times.

'He also wasn't sure where to go to avoid running into some type of surfer gang. He'd seen Point Break and while he suspected it was nothing but Hollywood bullshit, he didn't exactly want to find out the hard way he was wrong.'

The relationship with Levi's family who live in *the Mormon Church's spirit* and their inability to accept homosexuality - at least that their son/brother etc live it out - probably made this novel a little bit more interesting for me. It's a community whose values ??are basically unknown to me. And if I had a little hesitant and negative attitude earlier gave the author me a more positive picture with their family cohesion and willingness to try to slowly change, here in this story. As I grew up and live in a very non religiously and far come secular country and society, I always have a little difficulty understanding how the influence of the church, God and the Bible can influence people's perceptions of what is right and wrong so much. It's not that I don't believe in God, I'm like most Swedes member of the Protestant Church. But it's a very symbolic membership which basically hardly affect my life at all.

Levi's tough fight to get his huge (*Yes huge; it's parents, five siblings with wifes/husbands and 19 nephews - I just say; Wow!!*) Mormon family to accept his sexuality and life choices were so engaging to follow. Not to be believed, listened to and not being accepted for who you are and the way you choose to live on, is terrible. Here in this story there is, in any case, the whole time a family's wholehearted love, even if it's tough and hard sometimes.

"I think you want very much to make this black and white--to make us all out to be sinners or saints. But it's just not that simple. I think what you need to accept is that, just maybe, we're all something else. Maybe we're all something in between."

Even Jamie has a heavy luggage, a terribly heavy...

I don't want to reveal too much, but the spirit of the story is, after all, that with love, patience and confidence may you heal wounds, make life changes and also create and get great happiness.

I really cared for these two guys, the family circumstances and its solution. Perhaps sometimes was it a little too slow paced, but the more credible it was after all. I'm often a bit restless - so slow can be good. Their longing and slow pace closer together physically was so nice to follow. I was as nervous and anxious as the boys - sigh, they are so nice and cute! There was not a page in the book I didn't read with my heart and great interest.

'He loved Jaime. He loved him so much sometimes he thought he must certainly be losing his mind. It was hard to believe his heart could go on beating minute after minute, day after day, when it felt so distorted and huge and fragile.'

In my opinion, this is a wonderfully nice, tender and romantic, but maybe slightly sentimental, novel. There were new emotions, both in terms of relationships and sex, it was beautifully told and I just love when damaged and lonely souls will get another chance to heal and find peace. I'm very pleased!!

I LIKE - a very nice and touching story

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*...and so it was, that good idea they have, to take a course to become altered and non-gay ~ really?!!?*  
(view spoiler)

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### **Heidi Cullinan says**

I have a Thing about books revolving around abuse. In theory I like to read them, but they're so often poorly done, and a poorly done abuse book is a terrible, terrible thing. The balance is as delicate as a spider's web. It can't be too angsty, but it can't be too glib. Most authors think the way to deal with abuse is for the character to wallow directly, which I have to tell you, I've never seen a real abuse victim do in real life. The stories are also often so heavy you can't stand to read them without antidepressants.

Not so Between Sinners and Saints. The story has humor, to start. Sexton manages the balance of an abusive past by showing us not only Jamie's weaknesses but also his strengths. It's also not primarily a story about abuse. It's a story about past and pain, and most important of all, it's about family. Between Sinners and Saints is a story of what it means to be broken, what it means to be saved, and how no matter what has happened to you and no matter who you are, everything can be healed by love.

And Marie wrote it. She's always good. Go buy it today.

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### **Cole Riann says**

4.5 stars

I really enjoyed this book. I like reading slow and sweet love stories, and this definitely fit the bill, due to Jaime's history. Even more (though they often infuriated me), I enjoyed Levi's family. I think it was very smart of Marie Sexton to let this story run the course it did. Now that I think back on it, there isn't one book I remember reading right now in this genre that doesn't offer a complete resolution for coming out (even though Levi is already out) that isn't either complete and ultimate acceptance or estrangement. It is so often black and white, or the climax of the novel is the point in which the family accepts the MCs completely and without reservation. This is so often not the case in real life, especially in situations like this. Yet, I never doubted the love the whole family had for Levi, and I believe that they truly loved him. And not only did I find Levi much more mature than the family gave him credit for, but I thought it was incredibly mature of him to persist having to bear their disapproval instead of writing his family off and cutting himself off from them, even before he realizes that Jaime needs them as much as he needs Levi.

The only other thing I can say is that they should have chosen Coda!

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### **Ariana says**

\*4,5 stars\*

Wow. That was really intriguing.

At the centre of the book is an in-depth look at how Mormons might look upon homosexuality and 'its lifestyle'. And no, some of these views are not what I expected (while others were)

There are church doctrines, but then there are deep family values and a lot of love, too. But also blissful ignorance of some people in Levi's family that someone gay will remain gay, whatever. Despite yearlong

efforts to 'change' him.

The final discussion was exceedingly thought-provoking and took me by surprise. I have no idea how real this is or can be, but it was brilliantly argued.

Please do not get the impression this was a theological 'discussion' first and foremost. Not all all. This is essentially a love story, full of amazing UST, heart-breaks and feelings. Fabulous writing! But the religious element is very strong.

Levi is a lovely man and a beautiful lover. Making Jaime happy is the only thing on his mind, and if that means being patient about sex (and I am talking about months and months here...) so be it. And Jaime is such a broken soul. I strongly felt that he should have had more therapy after what had happened to him. It might have made his life more liveable.

I loved the gradual unfolding of their romance, Jamie's total oblivion when it comes to Levi's feelings and Levi's never-ending tenderness.

Fab book!

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### **Amy Lane says**

I grew up in a Mormon town and watched painfully as one of my best friends dealt with both the wonderful support and the painful doctrine after her parents divorced. Her struggle to choose the interpretation of her faith that felt right in her heart always struck me as poignant and real--and when reading this book, I saw Levi go through the exact same struggle. I loved that Marie Sexton didn't treat this lightly--I loved that she found both the good and painful in Levi's family dynamic. I loved that Jaime was not instantly healed and he might never be, and I loved that when he took his leap of faith it was complete and real in the same way Levi took his. Watching Levi go from heartless bad-boy to tender caretaker was a painful struggle, and the ending was nothing less than satisfying. Loved this book.

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### **Breann says**

Levi meets Jamie, his massage therapist, at a time in his life when all he cares about is his next conquest. So what does he do? Hit on Jamie, naturally. We learn pretty early on that Jamie has a deeply troubled past and still has emotional scars that causes him to have fear of being touched. When Levi comes on too strong Jamie is completely put off and wants nothing to do with the other man. Levi is able to finagle his way back into Jamie's life but with a very strict 'no touchy, no feely' rule set in place.

As their relationship and friendship grows Levi begins to realize how much he loves his best friend Jamie. This is when I realized how much I love Levi. He proves just how much he loves Jamie with his patience. He keeps his desires hidden so he won't frighten Jamie. Levi changes his selfish lifestyle choices for him and keeps Jamie safe, all without Jamie fully understanding why. Levi doesn't ask for anything in return, this wasn't a ploy to prove his love. He just does these simple, thoughtful gestures for Jamie simply because he loves him. It was beautiful, touching, and perfect for a sappy heart like mine.

Levi also deals with his Mormon family who loves him but highly disapproves of his homosexuality and lifestyle choices. This is a constant battle between him and his family. I thought this was *very* well done. Levi being gay and the drama it causes with the family, effects everyone involved. He's not the only one who's tired of the "talk" but his brothers and sisters are as well, and I was glad to see them start to stand up for Levi. Having experienced this in my own life, and being the sister in this situation, I thought Ms. Sexton portrayed parents who love their son but at the same time don't condone his lifestyle very realistically.

This was such a wonderful, touching, loving story of two men battling demons from their past and then looking forward together. I need a sequel!

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### **Lauraadriana says**

4.5 mayyyybe 4.75

Love is selfless, patient, open and forgiving. I think this story was about that more than anything for me. Levi comes from the LDS church he left his family years ago to live in Miami where he could be free to live how he chose, and he did he surfed, tended bar, had a lot of sex...That was life. After having pain in his back he goes to massage therapist Jamie Marshall for some help. Jamie is attractive, but closed off and shy and looks almost scared all the time he does not like to be touched.

Levi and Jamie begin a very slow moving friendship that everyday becomes more.

Sexual abuse is not an easy subject to write...I really appreciated that Levi understood that he needed to be patient and that a lot of times even how much the felt for each other could not suppress the fear and panic that Jamie felt. Their progression as slow as it was made for some beautiful moments, a touch, a caress, a hand on the cheek felt like a victory. I loved how Levi healed Jamie and how loving and protecting Jamie gave him what he needed.

I can get very fatigued with books that are heavy on the religious talk and I have VERY LITTLE, actually, no tolerance for religious bigotry, so was very reticent of what Levi's family would do...and they did piss me off at times. But in the end they loved him, and they tried hard to find a way to love him and have him back in their lives. The truth is that it is not easy to shed what you believe as absolute truth (as wrong as that belief may be), so I appreciated that they didn't stop trying and it was very clear that what they wanted most was Levi to be whole and happy.

This was a lovely story of what love can do to change and heal.

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### **Heather C says**

#### **Such a sad, heartbreakng story with a HEA**

I've been putting this off since the release because I was freaked out by the religion, abused MC, and the slutty MC. So yesterday I finally started it because I wanted to read something where I could really connect with and feel for the characters. And this was exactly what I was looking for.

First, there is Jamie, who spends his days healing people with his touch and his nights locking himself away and hiding from his inner monsters. He was abused as a child and suffers from severe PTSD. Then there is Levi. He spends *is life* fucking "no-names" in the back storage room of the club he bartends. Their relationship starts off as only friends and continues as friends for the majority of the book. Jamie is so "scarred" he is unable to trust anyone and soon Levi wants to be the person to take care of Jamie. But Levi has his own demons mostly stemming from being rejected for his homosexuality by his own family and their Mormon faith. He spends the first 50% of the book having sex with other people. I think these were the hardest scenes of the book for me to read. Even harder than Jamie's abuse flashbacks. I was going to post a spoiler and go into detail of what all Levi did, but right now I really don't want to think about it again. I'm just going to say that some of Levi's activities pushed the boundaries of my "accepting" zone and I would have to stop, take a few deep breaths and a few sips of water to recover. Most people may not see it as *that* bad, but it was hard for me. Once Levi finally reached his breaking point, I was a lot more comfortable with the story.

"Dear Heavenly Father, I know you may not approve of me or of the way I've lived these past several years. And I'm not asking you to forgive me for that because I'm not sure I'm sorry. But I *am* sorry for what happened on Saturday. I think you led me to Jaime for a reason, and I've screwed it up. I don't like what I've let myself become. I don't mean being gay, and if that's something you don't like, I can't change it. But there are other things I can change. And I think maybe I should. So I'm going to do what I can, and if you really did send me to Jaime for a reason, then I'm asking you please to let me try it again. Because I know I've failed at a lot of things, but I don't want to fail with him. Amen." ~ Levi

There is also *a lot* of religion in this book. Usually I hate that in my books and it made me uncomfortable in the beginning, but it's such a huge part of the story I just had to accept it. I hated Levi's family in the beginning, but by the end I was able to understand them somewhat. They really only wanted Levi safe and happy.

I really loved this story especially, I think, because I was in the mood for it. This is really not something I would usually prefer to read. Also, one of the things I love about Marie's writing is that the romance is never rushed. It takes the entire book to see Jamie and Levi's love for each other develop and grow. I'm so happy for their HEA!!

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### **\*J\* Too Many Books Too Little Time says**

#### **4.5 Stars!**

This one was good. Really good.

A bit on the heavier side. And a bit religious-y.

Definitely a slow build, but I thought it was completely appropriate.

Not a lot of steam, but enough.

A tad on the long side, but I was never bored.

There you have it in a nutshell.

Recommended read for sure!

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### **Lyn says**

Audio 5 stars

Story 5 stars

Religion is not my thing at all so when Levi's family start in about their views and the "gay life style" I had to shelf this book in my "piss me off" shelf.

The story is 5 stars for me because Levi and Jaime's love story is so freaking amazing and deserves all the stars. Their love cancelled out all the negatives of the ignorant religious views.

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### **Julio Genao says**

**not one, but two examples of unhelpful stereotypes of sexually abused persons used for facile romance-trope angsting.**

PEACE-OUT, HOMIE

\*returns, 5 minutes later, filled with righteous fury\*

let's just call it my trigger.

abused, raped, dub-conned-to-hell gay dudes who may or may not seek healing in the form of being whipped, chained, gang-banged, or choked the fuck out.

that's my trigger.

because while this world is enormous, and there are all kinds of people out there, and *definitely* people who fit any of those descriptors—the fact remains that you don't have to make a homo miserable to make him interesting to read about.

so when a chintzy romance novel does that—define being gay in terms of suffering—a motherfucker gets *really. pissed. off.*

because being gay has enough angsty fucking problems attendant to it without someone should posit, over and over, that one of them is being raped up the ass.

all to spice-up a stupid story that would have been perfectly compelling without it.

it's gratuitous. and it hurts to read.

gay men are not Rape Barbies.

they are not canvasses for the wildly irresponsible speculations of lazy writers who are unable to characterize human beings without appalling mortifications of the spirit, and of the flesh.

it's ugly. and destructive.

no matter *how* many shelter dogs they adopt in the epilogue.

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## Shelley says

***Between Sinner's and Saints* is warm and tender; often light and fluffy with the added intensity of an age old argument. A token of sinful sex and just enough of the saintly kind to get the heart rate going, all mixed together to create a surprisingly enjoyable read.**

After reading a rather noxious and amateurish m/f romance, this book was a balm for my ~~temper~~ head, heart and soul. The writing flows, there are no dubious characterisations, everything adds up, it's believable and void of insta - anything; just such easy reading – Thank you Marie Sexton!

Endearing characters with selfless motivations face off against the pious views of Levi's saintly Mormon family; fighting for the acceptance of his/their sexuality. Together Levi and Jaime find strength and courage in each other to overcome a past that has plagued Jaime with nightmares - is the general premise of the story.

I have to admit that this story is packed full of personal nostalgia for me. The surfing, the beach, the sunshine, yummy surfer boys and good times, the BEST of times; once again I could smell the coconut in the sunscreen and feel the warmth, recalling the exhilaration my surfing days now long gone is a bittersweet reflection, but one I revelled in none the less.

This is a plot I haven't *quite* read before. The author tackles the religion vs homosexuality argument without adding offense to either and offers a heart breaking look at both sides of the story. I felt that there are three lots of protagonists here: Levi and Jaime as well as Levi's moron family. All have suffered their own torment in rejection and lack of understanding. Will the slow building relationship between Jaime and Levi become the catalyst for all to meet a resolution and finally accept what is? Or are they to be cast out as sinners?

The story is very much focused on Levi, who lives a life of 'sin' working in a gay bar and sleeping with a different man most nights. He is gorgeous, cocky and lonely; living for surfing and sex until he gets a chance and a reason to change. I loved Levi with all his 'flaws' because his heart is just golden.

I will leave the secretive and damaged Jaime for you to discover, but needless to say, I loved him too.

If it wasn't for the church vs gay disparity and the personal nostalgia which garnered an extra star from me,

this might have been a bit too shmootsy in places, but still a solid 3 star likable read. As it is, it was just what I needed right now and I have to say I really did like it. It was perfect for me at this time.

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### **Bev says**

I struggled with the sanctimonious bigotry that Levi's family levelled at him throughout the entire book, and that's why I try to steer clear of books with a religious theme running through. That said, Levi saved the book for me, his character growth was brilliant in spite of his awful family.

The book would've benefited greatly from an epilogue instead of the abrupt ending that I was left with. It's a longish book and after all that to just cut me off with a HFN .... just no!

3.5 stars

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### **Wave says**

I didn't think that Marie Sexton could top *One More Soldier*, a book I love and have re-read many times, but *Between Sinners and Saints* showed me a different side of her writing and proved once again what an incredible writer she is. The plot and characters moved me so much that I couldn't put this novel down.

The protagonists will grab on to your heart especially Jaime who was vulnerable and scarred from his past experience. He was a complex character who was so fragile it seemed as if he would break at any moment, but he was by no means weak and he proved to be the catalyst throughout the story. Levi's family fell for him despite his being gay which went against everything they believed in, and he showed them at last what a wonderful person Levi was and how he had changed his life for the better. Levi's love for Jaime was unselfish, and he was so tender with him you will fall for him too. Both characters grew exponentially throughout the course of the book and the development of the plot to its conclusion was well crafted. This plot could have become a quagmire because of the themes of faith, homosexuality, rape, and a family in crisis, but the author wove them into a tapestry for a wonderful and moving story that will make you admire the way it unfolded and how the family conflicts were resolved without taking the easy way out.

The characters were all flawed, including Levi's parents who wore blinders and initially could not see any viewpoint but their own, but Jaime opened their eyes and hearts to another path and showed them that if you truly loved someone you would accept them unconditionally. This story is by no means a quick fix for religious prejudices and hate, and at times it was hard for me to understand why for 10 years Levi was treated like a pariah even though his family did acknowledge reluctantly that homosexuality was not a choice.

The author integrated a lot of information about the Mormon religion into the plot without making me feel that it was an info dump. The doubts each member of Levi's family experienced about the path they had chosen, and the impact their decision had on Levi seemed realistic as they tried to balance their love for him against their faith. To her credit Marie Sexton didn't demonize the Mormons or make Levi's family into selfish unfeeling people, instead they were portrayed as sincere believers whose lives were governed by strict religious principles. But faith can be a two edged sword and this was a thread that was woven throughout the story in a non-judgmental way.

*Between Sinners and Saints* could have been a downer because of the emphasis on religion and how people's faith and beliefs affect their lives, but it was actually fun. Jaime's dark sense of humour emerged and some of the supporting characters rationalized their own departure from the strict teachings of their faith while still hoping to enjoy the benefits of a heavenly afterlife. The characters were all fully fleshed out and the family dynamics were complicated as expected, but there was also a lot of love and friendship.

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