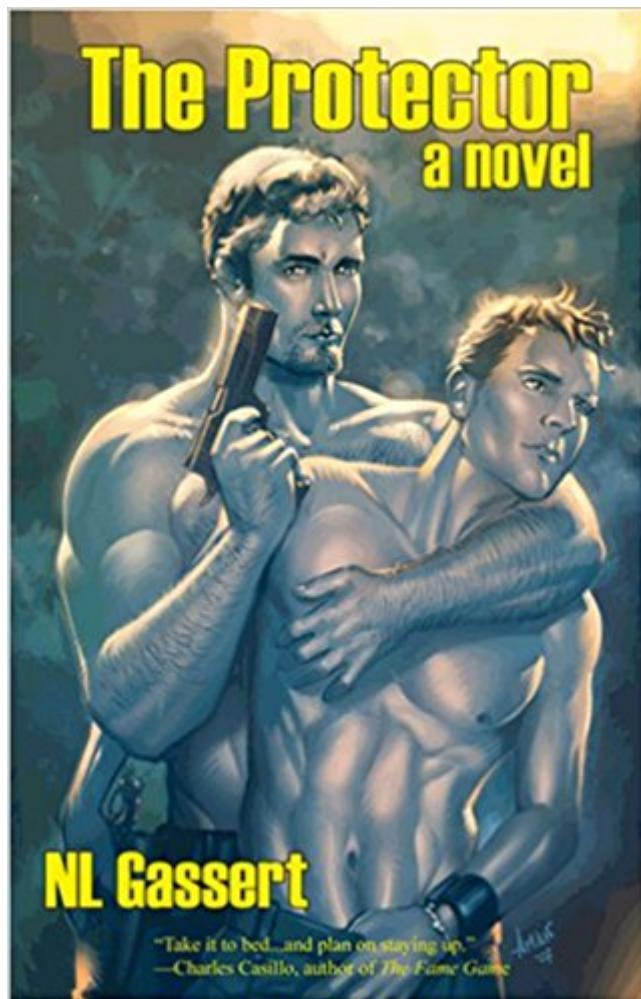


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## The Protector



## **Synopsis**

Soren Buchanan no longer wishes to work for his father, crime boss James Buchanan, nor does he want to continue his relationship with the dangerous and sexy Jolina Miciano. But Jolina has connections that would make James Buchanan more powerful than he already is. Unwilling to be a pawn in his father's game, Soren decides to stop seeing Jolina even if it means having to suffer through one of his father's vicious beatings. Beaten and bruised for his defiance, Soren flees to the FBI for help. Mason Ward, former US Army Ranger and security specialist, lives a quiet life on a house boat docked off the island of Guam. Despite his lack of companionship, Mason believes he is living the life he's always wanted. Then a job comes Mason's way, one that will turn his life upside down: hide Soren Buchanan. Hiding Soren Buchanan should be easy money, but not for Mason. Soren is young, seductive and lacking the type of discipline that doesn't leave bruises. It doesn't help that Soren's physical presence brings up desires Mason would rather not feel about a mobster's son. Now Mason has to keep his mind on his job while being chased by thugs sent to bring Soren Buchanan home...dead or alive.

## **Book Information**

Paperback: 191 pages

Publisher: Seventh Window Publications; 1st edition (January 18, 2008)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0971708967

ISBN-13: 978-0971708969

Product Dimensions: 5.6 x 0.4 x 8.5 inches

Shipping Weight: 12.8 ounces

Average Customer Review: 4.1 out of 5 stars 13 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #3,643,897 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #28 in Books > Gay & Lesbian > Literature & Fiction > Mysteries #23028 in Books > Gay & Lesbian > Literature & Fiction > Fiction > Romance > Gay #25295 in Books > Gay & Lesbian > Literature & Fiction > Fiction > Gay

## **Customer Reviews**

Literary chef Gassert serves up a delectable nine-course meal of murder, mayhem, money-laundering, terrorism, temptation, brutality, bisexuality, scandal, and sadistical (sic) father-son abuse. --William Maltese, author of the Stud Draqual mystery series Sexy, sizzling--and sweet! NL Gassert manages to combine the tenderness of first love with thrilling action in The

Protector. The tropical setting on Guam is fresh and beautifully evoked, and the engaging characters of Mason and Soren will keep readers turning the pages, rooting for these lovers against tropical storms and terrorist agents. --Neil Plakcy, author of *Mahu Surfer* The Protector delivers engaging characters, a fast-moving plot, and some very steamy love scenes. NL Gassert has crafted an exciting and entertaining romance that builds suspense and erotic tension with every turn of the page. Take it to bed...and plan on staying up. --Charles Casillo, author of *The Fame Game*

A native of Germany and nomad by choice, NL Gassert has lived on three continents and two islands, survived a number of typhoons and at least one earthquake, worked as a professionally-trained concierge, a public relations assistant, and a magazine reporter. NL Gassert has a master's degree in Communication and Information Studies from Rutgers University, chronic insomnia, and a voracious need to read. NL currently resides in a tropical paradise.

Warning: This review might contain what some people consider SPOILERS.

Rating: 7/10

PROS:-

The writing here isn't brilliant, but it's good. For the most part, it flows well and is easy to read quickly.- I found the plot interesting and unusual. I've read/seen plenty of stories about people who flee from gangsters because they witness a crime or are somehow connected to the bad guys, but I've never read one where the character repeatedly comes back into contact with the people he snitched on. It adds a tense and intriguing angle to the storyline.- I really liked several of the secondary characters. The majority of Mason's friends/family/acquaintances are very accepting of his sexuality and are thus very nice to Soren when they meet him.- Often I have trouble really believing in the actions of a story's villains: they're too one-dimensional or too cruel or not cruel enough to make me believe that the main characters would actually fear them. But the villains in this story are well done: they've all got nasty, physically abusive streaks, but they're mostly just politically (or monetarily) ambitious--and anyone who stands in their way has to go. Period.

CONS:-

The story is fairly short (fewer than 200 pages) and focuses so much on the plot that the romance suffers a bit. I believed in their sexual attraction, but I wasn't convinced at the end that the two main characters were in a forever relationship.- Occasionally, the exposition and dialogue have a bit of a wooden sound to them, and it's usually because the author isn't using contractions: "It is a scare tactic" rather than "It's a scare tactic," "You are clean" instead of "You're clean," etc. The majority of these instances occur in chapters told from one character's POV, so I'm willing to believe it was intentional; however, that character is from upstate NY, which doesn't seem to me as though that would explain his complete avoidance of contractions.

Overall comments: I enjoyed this story, but I

didn't love it. If you're looking for a good action plot with a bit of sex thrown in, this one might be just what you're looking for. If you want to read a similar sort of plot with more emotional depth, you might try Jane Seville's "Zero at the Bone" instead.

I feel confused by these reviews and can't figure out how their reaction is so different to mine. This was a wall banger for me, and I actually began to wonder who had written these reviews, were they all by her friends? But no, that's unfair, I've read a lot of these reviewers before, they are reputable folk. So why did they love it when I hated it? Well there are complete spoilers in this review, so don't read any further if you don't want to find them.. Mason pulls the pretty Soren onto his boat and the text more or less tells us they have nothing in common and then covers a week or so on the boat, with no conversation, no lingering looks, nothing really, and then 42% the way in, all of a sudden Mason realizes, as if from nowhere, that he doesn't want to return Soren. That's the first we hear of any deeper connection than a physical awareness, and it really felt like a bolt from the blue. Then Mason changes character. From stoic and self controlled, he becomes borderline inappropriate and can't keep his hands off Soren. And when Soren turns at one point and tells him he is a crap protector (or words to that effect) I had to totally agree with him. He never protected Soren, he always got caught and never had a clever way of getting them out. Frankly, as a hero, he was a major disappointment. And Soren was such a young 23 yo, I worried for him. He comes from a terribly abusive father and then this stoic controlling man wants him. I know that Mason will never hurt him, but the relationship dynamics didn't feel so good to me. And the last third of the book was positively stupid, with ridiculous villains that just kept popping up, making the good guys appear inept and stupid. I rate this book a wallbanger. I really don't know what the other people read... I find it a bit disturbing truth be told... I'm clearly not in sync with the other reviewers, but I found this to be an incoherent rambling tale with poor characterization and muddy relationship dynamics. I didn't even find that Guam came alive for me. (and the sex was not hot either. See, a wallbanger...) And at \$6.99 for 2448 locations, it's not good value either.

When Soren Buchanan decides to leave working for his abusive, crime boss father he goes to the FBI for help. He is placed with former US Army Ranger Mason Ward, who has become a security specialist and lives an idilic life on board his yacht in Guam. Keeping Soren safe and at arms length should have been a cinch, but this proves more difficult than Mason anticipates and their attraction becomes harder to ignore, despite the presence of very real danger. This was an wickedly enjoyable read. There was a great balance of strong characters, vivid surroundings and loads of over the top

action. Mason's rather overwhelming masculinity (and muscularity O-o) was a great hook and his care for Soren is sweet, especially as his head is telling him to do the opposite! Mason is rather gruff and certainly makes the redhead work for it. Though Soren might need some rehabilitation, to get rid of his of his bad boy habits, you can see the willingness of Mason to stay and put in the hard yards. Their burgeoning relationship is fraught with sexual tension that builds beautifully and when Mason finally lets desire kind of take over, the surrender and passion builds up to some seriously sexy writing. The pacing was good, although near the beginning there is rather a jump from when Soren arrives on the boat and then all of a sudden it seems to be some time down the track. Despite this, The Protector was an wonderfully engaging and sexy read, which kept me up way past my bedtime!

I really enjoyed reading this book and I would love to have a SEQUEL! The characters were great and the setting was very interesting; though sometimes a little hard to picture. I've never been to this country so I really had to use my imagination. But besides that, I really loved this story. I highly recommend!

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