

**Book Review: April 2004**  
by Cameron Abbott (reviewer at [IGW](#))



**shadowland**

**Radclyffe**

**ISBN: 1-933110-11-2**

**Trade paper, 240 pp, \$14.95**

**March, 2004**

**Lesbian Romance/Erotica**

**Bold Strokes Books, Inc.**

[www.boldstrokesbooks.com](http://www.boldstrokesbooks.com)

Independent Gay Writer

Ronald L. Donaghue

Editor-in-Chief

Radclyffe's new offering, *shadowland*, marks a departure from the author's oeuvre of lesbian romances, which have tended to use the worlds of law enforcement or hospitals as their settings. Fans of Radclyffe will not be disappointed by the new ground charted here, however. At its core, *shadowland* is a love story – albeit a dark one, as its name implies – and its appearance serves to confirm Radclyffe's place as one of the most accomplished and versatile writers of lesbian fiction.

Tackling the difficult theme of lesbian S/M, *shadowland* leaves all judgments and preconceptions at the door as it follows the protagonist Kyle Kirk in her search for love through an exploration of dominance/submission role-playing. In the hands of a lesser writer, the story could have easily devolved into a dry political manifesto or, at the other extreme, a simple series of cheap sex thrills. Although Radclyffe certainly gives us plenty of hot sex, she masterfully avoids the obvious pitfalls, and weaves instead a thoughtful and thought-provoking tale of Kyle's personal journey through the shadowland of the S/M demi-monde, from initiation to ultimate enlightenment.

Along the way, issues of power, trust and betrayal are deftly handled in nuanced and textured prose that is both intelligent and deeply personal. The sex is exciting, the story is daring, the characters are well-developed and interesting – in short, Radclyffe has once again pulled together all the ingredients of a genuine page-turner, this time adding some new spices into the mix. Whatever one's personal take on the subject matter, *shadowland* is sure to please – in part because Radclyffe never loses sight of the fact that she is telling a love story, and a compelling one at that.

—Cameron Abbott, author of *To The Edge* and *An Inexpressible State of Grace*

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## Book Review: September 2005

by Kathi Isserman (reviewer at [IGW](#))



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Readers will be pleasantly surprised by this unusual love story by Radclyffe. With *shadowland* she uses dominance and submission, the appeal of it as well as the abuse of it, to tell an erotic romance-one that is exceptional, powerful, and hopeful.

Kyle Kirk is restless and bored with her life so one night while driving her motorcycle, she decides to visit the bar "Leathers". While she had read about the world of s/m she had never experienced it first hand. There she meets the mysterious Dane. After a night together of passion and pleasure, Kyle is intrigued. She wants more, but Dane is only interested in one night stands with no emotional attachments. So as Kyle delves deeper into the world of dominance and submission, unsure as to where this might take her, she learns about a kind of power she never knew existed.

Radclyffe uses power, pain, and passion magnificently in *shadowland*. She illustrates to the reader through "scenes" how the exchange of power with trust can empower us and therefore give us pleasure, and how the anticipation of "pain", however we as individuals define that, can be erotic. *shadowland* also reveals the dark side of power where domination without consent and physical pain used as punishment can work to destroy us.

*shadowland*, through strong character development, throws away our preconceived notions about the world of dominance and submission. Radclyffe demonstrates through the individuality of each character and how they respond physically as well as emotionally to each other, that there is not a singular definition.

Radclyffe, the author of best-selling traditional lesbian romances and fast-paced mysteries, took a risk with *shadowland*. With intelligence and respect for the reader, Radclyffe and *shadowland* do not offer a simple formula for a love story, but through the depths of despair and powerlessness, *shadowland* shows that love and mutual trust can redeem us. Radclyffe had the courage to go outside the box and create a love story that exposes the dark side of human beings, and through this shadow emerges the promise of hope. Maybe the power of love can heal us after all.

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