



Perfect Rhythm

Jae

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Perfect Rhythm Jae

Pop star Leontyne Blake might sing about love, but she stopped believing in it a long time ago. What women want is her image, not the real her. When her father has a stroke, she flees the spotlight and returns to her tiny Missouri hometown.

In her childhood home, she meets small-town nurse Holly Drummond, who isn't impressed by Leo's fame at all. That isn't the only thing that makes Holly different from other women. She's also asexual. For her, dating is a minefield of expectations that she has decided to avoid.

Can the tentative friendship between a burned-out pop star and a woman not interested in sex develop into something more despite their diverse expectations?

A lesbian romance about seeking the perfect rhythm between two very different people—and finding happiness where they least expect it.

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Perfect Rhythm Details

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From Reader Review Perfect Rhythm for online ebook

Cristina says

I have to recognise what got my attention about this book was the subject of asexuality. I realize how ignorant I was because I didn't have any idea about asexuals (how they feel about sex). I also recognize that I had my doubts about how the author could build a romance between asexual and allosexual people. However I must say that Jae create a beautiful and intense romance, and the most important thing: a believable story.

Lexxi Kitty says

I received an ARC of this book from Ylva Publishing in exchange for an honest review.

This book stars two women (and yes you see both of their point of views) who have at least two specific things in common that are important to the story: 1) both are from the same small town in Missouri; 2) both are romantically interested in women. There's also one very important difference, though, that is important to the storyline: one of the women, Holly, is not sexually interested in anyone – she has a separation between her sexual desires (no one) and her romantic desires (women). As opposed to the other lead character, Leontyne, who does not have this separation between sex and romance.

But, with that mentioned up front, let's dive into the story.

Leontyne Blake, 32 or 33, is a famous musician, a 'pop star' as the description puts it. For the past, oh, 14 years she has worked hard at being at the top or near the top of the music scene (in her genre) and has found fame, fortune, and Grammys. As the book opens, Leo, who goes by Jenna Blake professionally, is performing at the last city on her current year long music tour. She barely made it to the end, and really needs a break, a vacation, something. Her manager, though, wants her to immediately start on a new album, become a judge on a music reality show, and then, thereafter, go back on tour. They bicker. It's kind of a common trope in music related books that the manager is a controlling dick who basically treats his/her 'talent' like children. To be fair, there are famous examples in real life of controlling managers (see: Elvis), but it seems to be the only version seen in fiction (at least that I've read). Well, as they bicker, and before they come to some conclusion, Leo/Jenna gets a phone call. From her mother. Who she hasn't seen in five years. The mother informs Leo, tentatively, that Leo needs to come home because her father had a stroke. And so – Leo returns home to a small town in Missouri.

Holly Drummond, 29, is an in-home nurse. Her current patient is a man named Gil, and she has become quite close with him and his wife. Gil is also known, or I should say has been mostly referred to by others during his life, as Dr. Gilbert Blake, or Dr. Blake. Not Gil. Certainly Gil's daughter, Leo, never called him Gil. Yeah, I'm kind of dragging that out – Holly and Leo meet because Leo returns home, and finds Holly in her childhood home, being the nurse.

Holly and Leo meet badly, so to speak, due to a misunderstanding on the part of Holly. In any other book I'd say 'then they became friends, then they became lovers', but that's more complicated here – see . . . oh, I didn't use the word yet, well the asexual nature of Holly. (Is there sex? Is that a spoiler? I'm not even sure if the inclusion or lack of sex is a spoiler so, to keep things spoiler less as possible -> (view spoiler)

So, that's the book – two women meet, both have the same type of romantic desires (towards women), both have even dated the same woman ('dating' isn't exactly the right word). Both have even had sex before this book started. One, though, does not have sexual desires, while the other does. So, it is, in theory, a standard celebrity-'commoner' romance – with the added twist of one of the characters being asexual.

What else is there to say? Well: I enjoyed the book. Not my favorite book by Jae, but up there.

In terms of 'words'. Oddly, there were more words, mostly medical in nature, which I didn't recognize, than there were words related to sexual orientations and 'stuff of that nature' that I didn't recognize. Hmm. Poorly created sentence. There were terms in the book I had to look up, 99% of them were medical words. One was sexual/romance/'stuff' related: I did not previously know the word 'queerplatonic', though I'm fairly certain I've seen several books that had that type of relationship in them.

What else, what else . . . yep, that's what I wanted to say. *nods*

Rating: 4.92

September 6 2017

Lex Kent says

A well written, enjoyable romance. I just realized this is my 500th review on Goodreads. I'm happy to have it be from one of my favorite authors period. For me, Jae never disappoints, and this book was no exception.

There has been a lot of new terms for sexuality and gender, that has come out in the past few years. As a lesbian, I want to support other minorities, but I honestly felt old, not knowing all these new terms. Sort of like when I used to explain how to use new technology to my parents, and their eyes would glaze over a little. I didn't want that to be me. I read a book by Rachel Gold, (she writes about characters that are gender fluid, lesbians, intersex, transgender, etc.) I felt like I learned quite a bit after reading one of her books. I also did a little research on the internet, but I'm still learning. I knew what asexual meant before reading this book, but I did not realize there was a spectrum to asexuality. I just thought asexual meant you were romantically involved but didn't want to have sex. But now I know there is a spectrum, from people that are repulsed by sex, to people who are willing to have sex for their non-asexual partners. I'm always happy to learn, so I appreciate Jae really explaining the topic of asexuality to me. She also explained it well. She was not preachy and didn't shove it down your throat, it is just informative.

Jae writes romance really well, and this book was on par of her others. While this book didn't have that sexual attraction heat, the characters absolutely had chemistry together. I was impressed how Jae stayed true to the characters, but was able to keep the chemistry up. There is a sex scene, that can be skipped if you want. I thought the sex scene fit perfect with the book. While it was not steamy, it was very intimate.

Jae is also great at writing characters, both Leo and Holly were great. I would not mind if they make an appearance in a future book. But besides the romance and great characters, this is a story about family, and healing hurts a family can cause. I have to say I cried once and choked up once. This is a feel good story overall, but there is some emotional parts.

My only complaint for the whole book, a few times I thought things slowed down too much. I think the book

could have been tightened up a tad, and loose a few pages. Other than that, no complaints or issues.

If you are a fan of Jae, chances are you will enjoy this. I think people who are asexual, will really appreciate this book. I still remember the first time I read a happy ending lesfic book. It was by Radclyffe. It really made me feel good, and was important to me. I think this book will have the same felling for someone who is asexual. But this is still a story for all romance fans, and I definitely enjoyed it.

An ARC was given to me by YLVA, for a honest review.

lov2laf says

I definitely have some mixed feelings on this read and I'm frustrated that I do because I wanted to enjoy this book so much more than I did.

I'll start off with what I liked:

A lead character in the story, that plays a love interest, is an asexual lesbian. This is an orientation that needs to be included more often and I appreciate the asylum this book offers to asexual people as well as those in a mixed orientation relationship.

Overall, I found the read educational because asexuality was represented as a spectrum rather than in black and white. The author did a good job of packaging this education through a good blend of dialogue, inner thoughts, and having a few asexual characters. For all of the info imparted it didn't feel like an info dump (mostly).

Jae usually takes time to bring characters together and that was no different here. Chemistry was developed and there was emphasis put on more subtle and sensual touches which elevated the intimacy. It was also interesting to see how Jae navigated bringing together a sexual person with a non-sexual person in a way both people could be satisfied and she did so in a believable way.

There is a sex scene that was preceded by a warning that it would happen in the chapter. I thought this showed great sensitivity towards asexual readers that are turned off by or repulsed by sex. Shoot, there's a good amount of sexual lesbian readers that don't even like to read sex scenes so this would be a good fit for them, as well. And, how that scene was ultimately written was just really well done.

Also, I think this is one of my favorite book covers, ever. It's really beautiful, eye-catching, and fits the narrative.

So what didn't I like?

Well, it took me until almost 40% of the book to start feeling engaged. I was just sort of bored and not all that interested in either of the main characters. I'm trying to put my finger on why and the best I can come up with is that the book felt almost robotic. It's like I could see what the author wanted me to think and feel i.e. insert character A with these traits here to this scene there to establish A, B, and C, kind of thing.

When the pretense of the lead characters not liking each other dropped, the story got interesting because the nonsexual/sexual conflict was big enough already and how in the heck these two would make it work was

more intriguing than anything prior.

I felt like the whole parent and child dynamic plot line was a missed opportunity and just sorely neglected. Leo is going home, really going home for the first time in fourteen years under unstable circumstances...that anxiety, resentment, grief, and anger towards her parents should've jumped off the page on every page. Most of the anti-hometown energy was directed just as much towards the town and inhabitants of it than towards her parents...and the parents was where the story should've been. Leo's attitude became almost removed and blasé; she was above everyone and the town and couldn't wait to get out.

What I wanted to see? Leo either shaking with constrained fury or getting paralyzed every time she was in her father's presence. How many times did she stop outside of her dad or mother's door without going in? Her heart beat raising, anxiety spiking, saying meaningless things or being spiteful, the guilt but anger Leo felt staying in her room. Should she go down the stairs or should she hide?...just more interactions and much more intense...whole days were skipped in the narrative. Nooo. That's where these things could've happened. It's agonizing to spend time in a house with people you love but don't like or you KNOW are disappointed in you and you have nothing to do BUT be there. Show me that. Really show me that.

I did see the author making Leo *uncomfortable* around her parents and a little angry here and there but that, to me, is about as far as it went...and it really needed to be more.

Ugh, I'm just so frustrated because the book could've been so much better while at the same time it still had plenty of good in it.

I'm going with 3.6 stars which rounds up to 4.

Diane Wallace says

'Ylva-Publishing ARC provided in exchange for my honest review'

2.5 stars! After reading this book, I realized my knowledge on someone's sexual status or preference is zero because in society there are so many different names now for example 'this-sexual' or 'that-sexual' and so on- which is really getting exhausting because a few years ago one was either gay or straight, lesbian or bisexual..now the list of sexuality names is so long one has to google just to find out each meaning and please i'm not trying to be some kind of stereotypical critic but it's painful and tiring to hear everytime another name added. Today's culture of sexual etiquette is permeated with false beliefs based on the doctrine of moral relativism. The storyline was okay only to a point but when the author tried giving the meaning of what an ace/asexual is during the whole book, it was only then that this story lost me..was confuse by the topic..one of the leading character had this issue with her sexuality and it took up a greater part of the book plus the synopsis did layout what the other lead did in this story(a musician/singer)..the details was many, the pacing just drags, the romance and chemistry was a none factor because of the topic which was mention ever so often..nice family side story and good supporting cast. The book alternates between is she or isn't she, will she or won't she? very frustrating writing and reading...

Jane Clements says

Well, that was different! I didn't read the blurb for this book before I selected it because I have enjoyed all of Jae's books, so I was confident I'd like this one, too. I expected a lesbian romance, and that's what this is – but it's not like any I've ever read before. That's because Holly – one of the main characters – is asexual.

Of course, I've heard about asexuality before. Asexual people are not interested in sex, right? It never seemed like a big deal or anything, but it isn't something I've ever given much thought to, up until now. I've never known anyone who has identified as asexual – or, if I have, they've never told me.

I am, therefore, part of the target audience for this book. Jae's two-fold aim in writing it is “to make non-asexual readers more aware of this sexual orientation and to help make ace-spectrum readers feel a little less alone.” If that gives the impression that the book is preachy or teachy in tone, then don't worry because it's neither. Jae weaves information naturally into the book's narrative.

The reader discovers information about asexuality as Leo's awareness of Holly's sexual orientation develops. Leo is the other main character, a more familiar kind of lesbian heroine. *Perfect Rhythm* is an extraordinary achievement. It is a compelling love story with a standard romance scenario. International pop star, jaded by fame, comes home to the small town she left fourteen years earlier – when she was rejected by her parents for her music and her sexuality – because her father has had a stroke. Here she meets Holly, her father's nurse, and love blossoms.

Obviously, though, the story turns out to be not-so-standard after all. Like most sexual orientations, asexuality cannot be easily or tritely defined. There is a spectrum of asexuality and Jae does not attempt to make Holly represent the whole spectrum. Holly is just one type of asexual person (ace) and it's her story and struggles that are depicted. Other aspects of asexuality are alluded to and represented by Holly's ace friend, Meg.

The most interesting part of the novel for me was to think about what we mean by intimacy in a relationship. Would I be happy to be in an intimate relationship that didn't include sex? To be honest, I'm pretty sure I wouldn't be. If I were to fall in love with an asexual person and that feeling were returned, is there any room for negotiation? Would sex even be satisfying if the other person wasn't into it? Jae explores the issues with a light touch and amazing sensitivity, recognising that any new couple has to explore and resolve a multitude of differences to make their relationship work.

I loved that we get to experience both characters' POV in *Perfect Rhythm* because it really helped in understanding how each one feels. Holly's POV is unique and as I read further into the story I came to understand and accept her feelings. Prior to reading this book, my reactions and thoughts would have been much more like those of the Dana and Ash characters. It's rare that I can say that a lesbian romance novel has changed my perspective and awareness but this one did. I would highly recommend it to anyone who has (like me) given little thought to asexuality issues, and to anyone who likes a charming and well-written lesbian love story.

MJS says

ARC provided by YLVA Publishing in return for an honest review.

I'm pretty sure I've read everything Jae's published and I've enjoyed all of her stories, though some more than

others. She's an author that writes very well and you can tell she researches her stories thoroughly.

This book was different in some ways from the 'norm' for her, in that one of her characters, Holly, is asexual, and that's not something I think I've ever seen in a lesfic (not sure that the accurate term for this book, but as both characters also identified as lesbians, I'm using it) before.

As with books that feature any sort of 'outside the norm' characters (POC, mental health disorders, disabilities, different sexualities) I give Jae (and other authors) kudos for providing an avenue for anyone who feels marginalised to see themselves represented, and also for readers to be able to learn something new.

Jae goes to great lengths to educate the reader (through Leo and Holly's mother) about asexuals, and while I felt it may have bordered on providing too much info, I still found it very interesting. I did have to Google a couple of the other terms (honestly, there are so many now that it's getting overwhelming, thank god for Google!), but learning something new never hurts.

I was a little taken by surprise when one of the chapters came with a warning, which is also something I've not seen in lesfic before, and I must admit, did jolt me out of the story, though I understand the inclusion.

As for the story itself, Holly and Leo are also great characters, individually and together. I believed that they fell for each other, loved how they talked to each other (not at or around each other as often happens in lesfic) and that there were no overwrought misunderstandings or stupid contrivances in the story.

The supporting characters don't have a lot to do in this one, with the exception of Leo's mother, who became more fleshed out towards the end of the story. The character of Ash was intriguing, mostly because I couldn't understand her motivation for staying in the closet, Holly was out, as was Leo, no one in town cared. It just seemed weird. I also thought Leo was a bit cruel in their last interaction, I get that she was defending Holly but the personal attack on Ash seemed too 'tit for tat' to me.

That said, while Jae's stories rarely disappoint, I can see why this wouldn't be for everyone. I'd recommend this to those who like slow burn romances, and reading something that's a bit different, I enjoyed both of those aspects.

Agirlcandream says

I always enjoy reading a book which enlightens while it entertains. I was impressed with the effortless writing which allowed me to begin to understand the spectrum of asexuality while delivering a beautiful slow burn romance. I admit to not being one of Jae's biggest fans as I've little interest in Hollywood, shape shifters or the old west. I enjoyed reading Heart Trouble last year and am now beginning to understand why Jae is a favourite lesfic author for many readers.

Perfect Rhythm caught my interest from the opening scenes when burned-out pop singer Leo returns to her Missouri hometown following the news of her father's stroke. Clashes between homecare nurse Holly and Leo set the stage for an enemies to friends connection between two women who shared a unique understanding of rejection in its many forms. Kudos to the author for the conversations necessary to give Leo and the reader time to understand those who identify as ace. Giving readers an option to skip the chapter containing a sex scene if they felt uncomfortable was a nice touch and added to the inclusive nature of this novel.

My lasting feelings surrounding this book were happiness and comfort. The life of a pop star is not an easy one. People make assumptions about who you are and how you live your life. I think Leo's life and loneliness made her more receptive to and most accepting of Holly, a woman who had dealt with misunderstandings her whole adult life.

A sweet read and a necessary one if we are to understand and embrace everyone in the LGBTQIA family.

ARC received with thanks from publisher for an honest review.

Starsandsun18 says

After reading this again I've a little knowledge about Ace.

I haven't met anyone that's why I'm really interested to read more about them. Good thing Jae explained it well.

Jenna Blake or Leontyne Blake is a well known grammy winner pop-star. She left her home town to escape her strict and unsupportive father. Now that her father is sick she has to go back to the town that she despised. She's reached her dreams but still she's not happy.

Holly Hollis is a nurse, she's also an Ace. I haven't really read an Ace character before or maybe I just missed it?

She's feisty yet very lovable. She's also very protective when it comes to her loved ones. That's why she's pissed on Leo because she thought that Leo neglected her family, especially her sick father. She's also the private nurse of Leo's father.

Enemies to friends to lovers plot. This is also more on a family thing. I like the slow burn considering the situation. It's not rushed, I also understand the "running circles" between Leo and Holly.

Holly's got a lot of insecurities and she's just careful to whom she'll give her heart. I also like how patient Leo is to Holly.

But my favorite part was between Leo and her Father. I can't stop the tears. I was really touched. It's simple yet powerful.

4.5

Hmm, is Ash next or Sasha? :))

Rach (Les Rêveur) says

This novel floored me. I've got nothing but admiration for Jae's novels but after reading this my acclaim has doubled. It takes a lot of courage to write a lesbian fiction romance about an allosexual Lesbian and a asexual Lesbian. I have researched the sub genre to find no other Asexual Lesbian Fiction novels around and I must applaud Jae for taking this subject and rocking it.

When popstar sensation Leo goes back to her hometown in Missouri to see her ailing father, she doesn't expect to meet her father's home-care worker, the alluring yet exasperating Holly. Holly seems to have a better relationship with Leo's family than she does but the more she gets to know her the more she discovers how much she sees Leo for Leo and not for rich and famous star. Their relationship is fraught with a minefield of emotions and expectations. The biggest issue being that Holly is Asexual but it seems to be more Holly's hold up than Leo's.

Perfect Rhythm is a love story from start to finish. I was worried that chemistry would be lost due to one of the main characters being Asexual however if anything it added to it and hiked up the intimacy more. What I learned reading this novel is that Asexuality has many ranges and other terms associated with it, some that I will list at the end. I just expected that with Asexuality there would be no sex however I was wrong. The only sex scene in the novel comes with a disclaimer that you can jump to the next chapter which I think some readers will appreciate.

I really hope other authors take the courage to step over the line and write about other sexualities in the LGBTQIA community.

Well Done Jae. Fantastic novel.

5 Stars

There are some terminologies in this book I knew and others I had to look up thanks to Google for their stellar definitions. I thought I would share:

Asexuality: the lack of sexual attraction to others, or low or absent interest in or desire for sexual activity.

Allosexuality: One who experiences sexual attraction.

Ace: is popular nickname for a person who is asexual.

Queerplatonic: A queerplatonic relationship is a relationship that is not romantic but involves a close emotional connection (platonic) beyond what most people consider friendship.

Aromantic: a person who experiences little or no romantic attraction to others.

Demisexual: a person who does not experience sexual attraction unless they form a strong emotional connection with someone.

Pansexuality: is the sexual, romantic or emotional attraction towards people regardless of their sex or gender identity

Cheri says

I've missed reading several of Jae's newer books but jumped at the opportunity to read this one. More visibility and inclusion of the BT and A aspects of LGBTQIA spectrum are needed and I think Perfect Rhythm is a great addition.

I knew the bare bones about asexuality so it was nice to get to know Holly and get a better understanding of some of the relationship hurdles she and other ace folks deal with. Besides the issues dealing specifically with asexuality, this is a pretty standard lesfic romance. Not too much angst but lots of relationship building and outside things going on that help to move our leading ladies toward finding love with each other.

I thought the dialogue and flow of the story were very good. If you're a fan of any of Jae's previous books, I have no doubt that you'll like this one, too.

Penny says

The best Jae book since.. I don't know. Under a Falling Star? Shaken to the Core?

Anyway. Perfect Rhythm delivers everything you want in a romance: two well build leading ladies, great pace and the perfect amount of angst. Having an asexual lead is just the cherry on top.

Tiff says

I have taken a step back from reading for a bit, there is a lot going on and at times I find myself reading current events more than being able to zone out with a book. It hasn't helped that the last couple of months nothing really sounds interesting to read. When I got a chance to read Jae's newest book, it sat on my Kindle for a few days before I opened it. Can I just say, I am so glad that I did. Perfect Rhythm has that quintessential Jae style. It's focused, romantic, detailed and has that amazing quality where you come out on the other side smarter than you went in.

Leontyne Blake is a pop star. She has made it big, a household name with millions of fans and millions in her bank account. She is also just going through the motions of life, she's burnt out, tired and needs a break from the constant travel of pop star life. She's lost in a sea of fans and adoration. When her mother calls and tells her to come home, her dad is very ill, Leo finally has a break from music but has to face her demons of coming back to her childhood home.

Holly Drummond is Leo's father's home health nurse. Her job is her passion, so going above and beyond the call of duty is nothing new to her. She is a godsend to Leo's mother. Holly is happy with small town life, loves seeing her friends and family regularly and she can't begin to understand how Leo left her hometown and her parents behind.

These two start off on the wrong foot, they spar a bit before breaking down and communicating their misconceptions about the other. Jae keeps the tension high and then takes it from "enemies", friends and then to romance. She does it wonderfully, the emotions that pour out in this book are amazing. I found myself hanging on every word, devouring their dialogue and loving every moment. It is a very well written romance!

While the two characters move from friends to the development of romantic feelings, Holly holds back from Leo. Holly is an asexual lesbian. Coming from poor relationships in the past, Holly is not willing to take that risk with the world famous pop star, no matter how down to earth she is. Leo is everything she wants in a partner, but the uncertainty of their future is too great to chance it. You can say angst, and it's my favorite when done right. Let me tell you, it's done masterfully!

Never does the book feel like a human sexuality book or preachy soapbox, this is a romance novel. The love story is front and center, Holly lets Leo know how she feels, her experiences, how she's different but it never overshadows the heart of the book. You don't want to miss this one, it's a fabulously written romance that

pulls at your heart strings. Thank you, Jae, for a book that renewed my faith in taking time out for a damn good book.

Pin says

This is Jae at her best. Backwards to Oregon is still my favorite by her (and probably will be forever), but Perfect Rhythm is not too far behind.

5 stars

Sep 18, 2017

Luce says

4.5 Stars rounded up to 5 Stars.

As I have come to expect, a well written book by Jae. This time around a romance with unique MC's. Mega Pop star Leontyne Jenna Blake returns to her hometown when her Father suffers a stroke. She eventually discovers that here in Fair Oaks she is not Jenna Blake pop star, but She's just Leo Blake. "She is still the daughter of Gilbert & Sharon, you know? The little girl who got a rock stuck up her nose when she was three." Holly's Mother, keeping it real.

Leo meets her Father's full-time caregiver nurse, Holly and both have insta-dislike for each other. But as they spend time together they eventually become friends. Holly is reluctant for their relationship to become more serious because she is asexual. This is where Jae's masterful writing explains asexuality without it sounding like it's a google definition or information dump. Before reading this book, I had heard the term but didn't really understand what it meant. I wasn't wrong but what I didn't realize the wide spectrum of asexuality, that Holly/Jae explains to Leo.

Although Holly's asexuality is an important part of the book, it is by no means the only issue Leo has to deal with - her estrangement with her Father, his illness, her career and her music and just maybe she comes to like the small town and its inhabitants. And lest we forget, it is a romance.

My only quibble is I thought closeted Ashley deserved a tiny bit of understanding. Leo ran away, but Ashley stayed in the small, southern town, never acknowledging that she was a lesbian. She was afraid and didn't have many if any other lesbians other than Holly for support which she lost.
