



## Prey

*Andrea Speed*

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**Prey** Andrea Speed

**2nd Edition**

**Infected: Book One**

In a world where a werecat virus has changed society, Roan McKichan, a born infected and ex-cop, works as a private detective trying to solve crimes involving other infecteds.

The murder of a former cop draws Roan into an odd case where an unidentifiable species of cat appears to be showing an unusual level of intelligence. He juggles that with trying to find a missing teenage boy, who, unbeknownst to his parents, was “cat” obsessed. And when someone is brutally murdering infecteds, Eli Winters, leader of the Church of the Divine Transformation, hires Roan to find the killer before he closes in on Eli.

Working the crimes will lead Roan through a maze of hate, personal grudges, and mortal danger. With help from his tiger-strain infected partner, Paris Lehane, he does his best to survive in a world that hates and fears their kind... and occasionally worships them.

*First Edition published by Dreamspinner Press, June 2010*

## Prey Details

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Author : Andrea Speed

Format : Kindle Edition 384 pages

Genre : Romance, M M Romance, Fantasy, Paranormal, Shapeshifters, Urban Fantasy, Mystery

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## From Reader Review Prey for online ebook

### Sofia says

3.5 stars

I think this might be the beginning of a serious hook up for me. Roan and Paris have started worming their way into my heart and I know I am heading towards serious feels. Hope my heart is up to it.

This was a slow read, I did not manage to gobble it up in a day or two like I gorp up other books. But I didn't mind this at all. I loved the world building, Ms Speed's brilliant take on shape shifting. Just a totally believable exploration of this world she created and the pulls and pushes that make it up. No glorification of shapeshifting here. I also love her wit and social commentary via her characters, such nuggets as

*Matt's blue eyes shifted nervously between Roan and him, as if he knew he didn't have a shot in hell at this, but he was far too committed to back out now. (Also known as the Iraq war strategy.)*

Roan is like a eat dog with a bone when it comes to solving crime. Once he gets his teeth into something he does not let go. The couple of crimes solved in this one were nicely intricate and allowed for the characters to develop and is a proper showcase for their relationship with its banter, care, lies, denials, worries and most of love.

I am looking forward to the next one.

### Buddy hunt read with Rosa, R\*A, Otila

BR thread

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### Mel says

In Andrea Speed's world of the *Infected* series: a part of the population is infected by a virus, similar to AIDS, which has turned people in to various types of cat strains. The cats have viral cycles which can't be influenced and the transformation is accompanied by pain and loss of the conscious human mind. Being infected with the cat virus is nothing romantic or fancy: it's scary, hurts like hell, eats away a great deal of your body weight and –depending on the type of strain you have- costs you your longevity.

Roan McKichan is a virus child: which means he is born with the cat virus and is used to being an outcast his whole life. On top of having the lion strain, Roan is a foster child, Scottish, gay and a redhead! Safe to say: he doesn't have it easy. Except there is Paris Lehane; Roan's superhunkydory boyfriend, formerly supermanwhore, now super manipulator.

The love between Roan and Paris is palpable. We get to feel their feelings of love, trust, insecurity and fear. The romance is very subtle but there is no sex (except for some kissing), the sex scenes are pretty much

faded to gray.

That's because Infected is mainly an urban fantasy series. The focus is very much on the story. The suspense plot is detailed, innovative and engaging. And while Roan is trying to solve his mystery cases, we try to solve Roan and Paris. Throughout the story we learn bits which we can piece together and I ended up falling in love with both Roan and Paris, while – mind you- they are imperfect in so many ways. Same goes for the secondaries, Gordo, Murphy, Matt, who are very lovable despite (or maybe because) their quirky ways. Roan's cynicism gave the story a humorous tone, but –together with the impending doom of one of the beloved characters- it also added to the bitter sweet feel in general.

I can't wait for the next book to come out in December. I do hope we get to *see* more of Roan and Paris' antics in the bedroom (I don't want to sound dirty but I want to see their love consummated goddamnit!).

A great read for urban fantasy-lovers! 4 stars.

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### **Tamika♥RBF MOOD♥ says**

3.5 stars

Okay so I've had this book for a long time. Thank Bingo for calling the Urban Fantasy shelf. I knew a little bit about the series from other friends. I knew it heartbreak expected in book two, but urban fantasy isn't my go to genre. I like romance and even paranormal mixed together. So I was very hesitant about reading this. I know book one in a lot of fantasy series deals with the world building and some times that can overwhelm a reader. It can be difficult to follow along with the story, the terminology and the rules to the story that before we look up and have finished I don't know what's happened to the characters. What Andrea Speed did was good. She split book one into two novels, where there was world building and introductions to the world but we got to see these characters in all their glory so book two wouldn't seem like an introduction into the series.

Our two main characters, Roan and Paris are cat shifters who inherited the cat virus in two different ways. They were definitely night and day, but I really enjoyed them. I'm still a little off put of the no sex in the book, but once I started reading, I'd realized I didn't need it and I was good to go. The story holds up on its own merit and it's good. I loved Roan and Paris relationship. Roan is this tough as nails, ex-cop turned private eye who seems so grouchy and grumpy, but it a soft ooey goey marshmallow underneath it all. Parish brings out the best parts of Roan and this is where I noticed that I didn't need the sex I was 1000% comfortable with them being together. It doesn't help that Parish is fine as hell. Clearly he has something about him besides his looks that has everyone nodding yes about him. I really enjoy his charisma and his personality plus he's super bad ass.

I definitely like the plot surrounding the cat strain virus, the cast of characters. Oh my goodness I loved the diversity a lot. So many different colored people in the cast. I especially love Diego, Matt and Kevin!!! I want to wrap Kevin up in a hug. I should definitely talk to Ms. Speed to see if Kevin gets someone down the line or maybe I should wait until I finish the series. This was a good start to an amazing series it seems like. I'll be back reviewing my journey as I continue to explore this world. I'll leave you with this quote, it's my favorite of book one. (SN: Think I'm going to leave a quote after each book read)

*"You are so funny. You do know I love you more than I've ever loved anyone, right? Well, admittedly, I never really loved anyone before, but saying that blunts the impact. I know you've got the whole hard-boiled detective thing going on, but I know what you're really like. I know that under all that armor you're the most decent man I've ever met. You're my hero."*

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## Rosa, really says

Welcome to another chapter of my life where...

Seriously, people. Pants. What's the point?

Okay. So. *Infected Prey*. Review: I really like it and I want to read more.

Further details:

First we have Roan (said like "lone").

Well, like that but minus 15 years and with a punk rock t-shirt.

Roan's a PI. He's cynical and jaded -- character traits every PI must have. I for one will never grow tired of it.

If there's a PI in anything I always imagine this:

Don't judge me. Humphrey Bogart is awesome and I'm still pissed he died 20 years before I was born so now I can't marry him and heal his pain. Fucker.

Okay, so Roan is one of the "Infected," meaning he has a blood-born disease that makes him turn into a lion once a month. Not because of the moon and it really doesn't sound like much fun as it involves every bone in his body breaking and reforming.

But Roan isn't just an Infected, he's a virus child, meaning he was born with the disease. All sorts of side effects develop during this book and he's worried he's losing his humanity.

On the bright side, Roan has a boyfriend, Paris, who's really, really ridiculously good looking:

Paris is an Infected also. He's got the tiger strain which is hardest on the body and the suckiest strain of the disease to have.

He may look and act all cute and enjoy referring to himself as a reformed man whore, but fuck around with Roan and he's all:

Roan and Paris face two major challenges: First, the "Church of Divine Transformation" which is basically a cult that thinks being an Infected is a gift from God. Morons. Second, they face Humanity First, an anti-cat group. Basically, they're like any hate spewing group who resents anyone different for having the balls to exist. Motherfuckers.

By the way, you're not going to find much of this:

At first I was like, "WHY THE FUCK IS THERE NO FUCKING FUCKING, FOR FUCK'S SAKE?" But, shockingly, sex isn't necessary in every book I read, so I got over it.

But it isn't all super serious, you may not be rolling on the floor but both Roan and Paris are pretty funny.

Coldplay--the most innocuous band since Al Stewart. It wasn't bad music, it was just so aggressively vanilla that blandness was the only objection you could make about it: music as plain, boiled oatmeal. It probably kept you regular.

My reaction to this was:

- A. Hey ASSHOLE, I *like* Coldplay!
- B. That's pretty fucking funny.
- C. Who the fuck is Al Stewart?

Anyway, for some added lightness there's Matt. He's a minor character who traded drugs for large amounts of caffeine. I'd give you a quote but it would go on for pages cause he can't shut the fuck up. It's adorable.

By the way, using the search term "blond twink" is a really great way to find porn. Thought I'd mention it. But you pervs probably already knew that.

Although at the beginning I found it just a skosh slow, that didn't last long and soon I was really liking it. I'm eager to read the next book, *Bloodlines*.

BR with Otila, R\*A and Sofia. Thanks, ladies! <3

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## R \* A Reader Obsessed \* says

### 3.5 Stars rounded up

For those looking for something a bit different from the typical were/shifter canon, this is your book. In this reality, if you're not human, you're either born with a cat affliction or infected with one of the various cat viruses. Regardless, this change to animal form occurs monthly without conscious effort or retaining one's humanity. This series focuses on Roan, an ex-cop turned private detective, who along with his lover Paris, somehow finds himself smack dab in the middle of solving cat related crimes - intentional or not.

MC Roan is a born cat. On the outside, he's kinda an asshole - jaded, stoic, grumpy, and cynical. However deep down he's a fatalistic tragic hero with a heart of gold and a strong yearning for justice.

Paris, infected by the cat virus, is his equally fatalistic partner - a seemingly gentle, charismatic soul who wields his charm expertly with a manipulative edge and grit.

That being said, those who want erotica, you're not going to find it here. It's actually a dense with details, paranormal mystery as Roan inevitably uncovers something more sinister while investigating his various cases. This book has kidnapping, murder, cultism, hate crimes, and religious fanaticism. It also has self deprecating humor, wonderful wit, sexy banter, and unfortunately tragedy, for being infected is "*not cool, not sexy, not exotic; (but) painful, heartbreak, agonizing*".

There is romance and it's a very touching, emotional one at that - but all smex is off page. At it's core, it has wonderful world building, interesting suspenseful plots, and great complex characters who have a lot of story left to tell - especially as Roan's special abilities grow and Paris's ultimate fate is further explored. An overall great entry to the genre!

**And a shout out to a great BR with Sofia, Rosa, and Otila. Thanks girls!**

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## Tara♥ says

DING, DING, DING!! WE HAVE A WINNER!!!!

^^^^^

This be me right now!!

I'm a very happy kitty lover!!

I absofuckinglutely loved this book. I've kind of been putting off reading this for a while. There is one very big reason and lots of little ones but now all I keep thinking is that I'm a total moron and should start putting on my big girl pants more and read the things I know are going to hurt but are probably going to be

awesome. I say this every time I read something that I love that I have been putting off because of potential hurtz but this time I mean it dammit!!

So...

One of the things that kind of put me off was that I had heard there was a distinct lack of romance in this. Roan and Paris are an established couple and there is no, I repeat no, smexy times at all in it. But here is the thing, I've learned that smexy time does not equal romance and the 'meet cute' and blossoming relationship does not equal romance. I personally thought that these two were two of the sweetest most romantic couples I've read. They were so adorable and their love for each other was clear to see. They were just lovely without being sickly about it.

**"You are so funny. You do know I love you more than I've ever loved anyone, right? Well, admittedly, I never really loved anyone before, but saying that blunts the impact. I know you've got the whole hard-boiled detective thing going on, but I know what you're really like. I know that under all that armor you're the most decent man I've ever met. You're my hero."**

Before I discovered mm one of my most read and most favourite genres was Urban Fantasy. This is out and out Urban Fantasy and it is the business. The world building, the cases, all of the characters, I'm hooked. Roan has the potential to totally turn my world upside down and I've decided to let him.

**"I'm the king of fucking cats. I'm the alpha male."**

**"I wonder if I wanted you, or if it wanted the tiger."**

**"I've just wanted to believe I was more than a virus, but I don't think I can deny it anymore. I am my disease; I'm not sure I'm all that human."**

I'm in the middle of a reading challenge but as soon as I'm done Infected: Paris is next followed by Infected: Bloodlines. I may need some form of therapy after that.

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### **Otila says**

Roan is an ex-cop turned PI. He's cynical and snarky-is there any other kind- and the only person whom he's let get close to him is his current boyfriend and business partner, Paris. This book is divided into two novellas and each has a case that Roan is hired to solve. In the first he's hired to find a missing teen and in the second he's hired to look into the murders of werecats. Of course the deeper he digs the more complicated everything gets.

Roan and Paris are werecats also known as infecteds. Paris's tiger strain has a high mortality rate and so there's that feeling throughout the book that he won't be around for long. This probably isn't going to help Roan be any less cynical. I love their relationship, though. They complete each other. Although my pervy

side did miss the sex, it's probably not **needed**.

I enjoyed the world building and the characters and I loved the humor. This is more of a mystery series than romance and I'm ok with that. It definitely seems like a series I'm going to be sucked into. Can't wait to read the next one-but I'll have to since the rerelease isn't out until mid-October.

#### **BR with Sofia, Rosa and R\*A Reader Obsessed**

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#### **Eugenia says**

##### **Great Shifter Mystery!**

.....3.5 Stars.....This is not your typical shifter story. I liked the originality in this urban fantasy, my first book by Andrea Speed. Although I e read books where Shifters were ostracized for what they were, here they were shunned for being mindless killers. For the most part, this held true in this alternate reality.

I would have liked more of a backstory on the cat virus as well as on the page sex. I also found some of the dialogue dated and trying too hard to be funny.

Still, I enjoyed it and will continue with the series since I really like he MCs.

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#### **Jenni Lea says**

This was really good and I want to devour the entire series but I'm so scared to read book two. I know what's going to happen and I don't know if my heart can take it. Gah!

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#### **Emma Sea says**

2.5 stars

I won't be reading book 2, because Paris. All the hugs for Paris.

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#### **Ami says**

##### **4.5 stars**

This book has an intelligent urban fantasy world build up; a world where (instead of AIDS) people can be infected with cat virus. Depending on the virus strain, those people will be transformed into the respective cat -- there were five separate strains: cougar, lion, leopard, panther, and tiger. Roan McKichan (read:

"McKee-Cann") is an ex-cop turns private detective is a *virus child*: he was born with the virus integrated to his DNA (his strain is Lion and he is a lion for five days out of every month.). While his partner (and lover), Paris Lehane (after the myth, not the city) is a tiger-strain infected.

This book actually consists of two *books*. In book 1: Roan takes a case to look for a missing child. Danny Nakamura is a kitty worshipper (those people who want to get infected). During the investigation, Roan stumbles into multiple murders, which leads him and Paris into a possibility of a hybrid virus child. Book 2 takes place exactly after book 1 ends, and this time Roan (reluctantly) takes a case from Eli Winter, a leader of "Church of the Divine Transformation," the premiere kitty cult. The case is missing infected kids who are possibly murdered. Along the way -- in this two books -- Roan must also deal with changes in him, how he seems to be able to transform outside of his viral cycle; as well as an impending doom in Paris's life since no tiger strain victim had ever been documented as living over the age of thirty-five; while Paris is reaching the age of 30.

I'm in such awe with the world presented in this book. It sets in contemporary (there are so many contemporary reference, from Green Day to Pete Yorn, from *Law and Order* to *The Wire* to YouTube) but at the same time it feels like a different world; a world with infected victims and cat worshippers. It becomes so real without being too *out there*. Roan and Paris are two enganging characters; especially because they are so different. Roan is the *ideal* private detective you find in characters like Sam Spade; he has his morality and he is more grumpy. He takes such non-sense people and will not think twice to hit scum people like wife-beaters or child-abusers. While Paris is the charming partner, he calls himself Roan's "Guy Friday" -- a natural manipulator and man whore, Paris can charm anyone into submission. Though anything sexual is put in the backburner, there is no doubt about the strong bond (and romance) between Roan and Paris. They are one unit, where one just makes the other better. The secondary characters are also appaling, from Roan's friends on the force to Paris's fag-hag best friend.

It's a very well-written urban fantasy series with a solid crime/mystery element. I can't wait to read the upcoming sequel, ALTHOUGH, I sense some melancholy ahead especially due to concern of Paris's health (better prepare tissue for it).

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### **Kyle says**

First, I have to admit that I've just finished reading the 8th and final book of the Infected series and I decided that I just had to step back and write a review of the first book. Why? To encourage everyone to invest the time and read the series.

The were-cat virus appeared out of no where. For three or four days every four weeks, the infected transform into a big cat. If you're infected young enough and you're strong enough your body might be able to endure the stress of the transformation but you're not expected to live past 30 years of age. If you're over 30 when you get infected that first set of transformations will most likely kill you.

Ex-cop Roan McKichan works as a private detective trying to solve crimes involving other infecteds. Born infected with the lion-strain Roan has a unique view of the virus that for those infected is basically a death sentence.

Andrea Speed has created a fascinating world, where Roan and his tiger-strain infected partner, Paris, work to solve cases in a world that either hates and fears their kind or worships them.

Infected: Prey is one of the best books I have ever read. I instantly became invested in the characters. Their reactions to a world dealing with the spread of the were-cat virus are completely believable. There are hate groups that want to round up all infected and quarantine them. Even a cult leader that encourages teenagers to become infected because it's the next step in human evolution. Despite how crazy all that sounds, in the world of the were-cat virus, you know that would actually happen.

If you finish this first book and don't immediately reach for the second, I'll be shocked. I know I did. As I progressed through all eight books of the series, I just got more and more invested in the characters. This world really sucked me in and I loved it. Definitely one of my favorite series and I know that at some point in the not to distant future I'll have to re-read it.

For those who see that this is a gay themed series and say, "no thanks," please reconsider. If you pass this series by simple because of that you'll miss out on a great story. The main character Roan is of course gay but he's also infected which is what the story is about. Obviously, other characters in the book are also gay, but there are also, bi, straight and even an asexual character. I never found the books to be "in your face" regarding the whole gay theme. If nothing else I think the series gives those with little or no contact with the issues surrounding being gay, a better understanding of the challenges it presents. But most importantly, Andrea Speed, has proven that a series of books doesn't have to be set in the cookie cutter world of the heterosexual to be great.

My ratings for the eight main books in this series ranged from four to mostly five stars. The whole series rates a firm five stars. Have you ever finished a series and realized you're going through a brief grieving process because you know there won't be anymore books to read? Well, that's how I felt after finishing Infected: Epitaph. It's a great series of books and I highly recommend it to all readers age 14 and up.

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## **Monique says**

**This is made up of two novellas; Book 1 - Infected 3 stars. Book 2 - Prey 4 stars. Overall 3.5 stars.**

This is an Urban Fantasy, Paranormal Romance and Crime Thriller, really focused more on the mystery element than the romance. However, it was the complexities and the great characterization that was the driving force behind the story.

This book is a very different, unique and a more intelligent interpretation of how humans become shape shifters and as this is an m/m novel, I found it interesting that the author used the same infection process of the disease, as that of the AIDS virus, transferred by bodily fluids through blood and sex. The infected victims also being dogged by the same hysteria and pariah status in the population as those of the AIDS virus, especially towards the gay community as this was also thought to be the origin of the infection....but of course, this is fiction and the infected take on a variety of forms from the cat family, however the cat has no attachment to his human form during the change and kills indiscriminately on instinct alone. This change is no fluffed up beautiful Hollywood transformation either, it is brutal in the intense pain suffered by the victims, some not surviving the broken bones and trauma to the body alone, never mind the gangs of vigilantes and religious freaks intent of ridding the world of this scourge.

Roan has grown up with the hatred, scorn and suspicion of 'his kind'. He is different, he was born with the virus and suffered because of it. Growing up as a ward of state, in and out of foster homes he was only too aware of the prejudice and fear of the ignorant. To them he was a diseased freak and learned to fight hard to defend himself from an early age...alone in a world that thinks of him an abomination.

When Roan meets Paris he is close to death, in complete meltdown having lost the will to live and burdened with the guilt of realising he had killed during the change. Paris is infected with the Tiger virus, the fiercest and deadliest of all the strains. As a Tiger he is capable of killing whole families with no recollection, it is also the strain with the highest mortality, where the victims die young, if they can get through the first transition at all.

I liked how this was different to normal romance novels, for as we meet our two MC's they are already in an established relationship, happy and comfortable, despite being total opposites on everything apart from the deep love and affection they share, their warped, wacky and snarky sense of humour and of course the virus that rules their existence.

I am so very glad the publishers/author combined the two novellas in one book, as I found the first a slow struggle, at times drifting and loosing interest through the cluttered descriptions, world building and characterization, some of which was lost and wasted as it wasn't pertinent to the future plot. I just couldn't seem to get a grip on the story, which was also challenging as there were two investigations ongoing! It was information overload!

This was mostly told from Roans POV and at times his inner musings were completely random...a small thread of information, taking him off in a different direction, only to return to the task at hand! In the first book I would have liked more interaction between Roan and Paris, Roan seemed to spend most of his time with and conversing with his former colleague and friend on the force Gordo, who by the way is just one of many great characters but I just wanted more of the beautiful and charming Paris who is also manipulative! this is repeated on numerous occasions unnecessarily.

The writing in this book is excellent and I understand the stigma attached to first novels, with lots of world building which I know is essential for the future series, but I just felt that perhaps she was trying to hard, at 30% if I were a DNF kind of person, I would have given up...so thank goodness I am not!....as I would have missed the second novella where the author completely redeemed herself. This had more action, flowed smoothly and we actually got to see more of the relationship between our main characters. So in the end I thoroughly enjoyed the second book and will definitely read the rest of the series.

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### **Christina says**

#### **3.5 Stars!**

This was a very good start to the series. The book is made up of two novellas/stories. I gave Infected 3 stars and Prey 4 stars. This is a world where people can get infected by a virus, which depending on the strain, will transform them into a certain type of cat species. Basically, it's the paranormal version of AIDS. The stigma is there, the pain and isolation both physically and mentally, and a shortened life span. The world

building is excellent. It's fascinating and you get immersed immediately.

Roan is a virus child; he was born with the lion strain. He's pessimistic, snarky, and sharp as a whip. His partner, both in life and work is the lovable and sexy Paris. They make a great team. Roan is a private investigator and Paris is his "Boy-Friday". You can feel how much these two love each other. That doesn't mean there are no secrets and communication issues. Of course there will be, they're men! The romance takes a back seat to the stories. The plot/mysteries are the focus. Through the story, we find out more and more about both Roan and Paris as individuals and as a couple.

Having said this, I had several issues with the writing/editing. It got to the point where it affected my enjoyment. It was repetitive and at times the author was heavy handed with inner monologues. We understand that Roan is cynical and Paris is manipulative. We got it after the second time, no need to hear it 20 more times! This led to my biggest issue: the "telling" and not "showing". It was annoying and got on my nerves. The last little bug that I have to complain about was the over usage of parentheses. Most of the time it was unnecessary. It was grating and many times pulled me out of the story. I noticed that most of the time it could have been worked into the story seamlessly.

I sincerely hope some of these issues are cleared up as the series progresses because despite its shortcomings, I love the world and Roan and Paris. They are great characters and I can't wait to see how this unfolds.

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### **Rachel Haimowitz says**

First, a couple clarifications. This is actually two novellas, Infected and Prey, rather than one long novel. Also, there is no sex in this book (though it's very much M/M), but that didn't actually bother me at all.

I spent most of my reading time with Infected: Prey thinking about how great it almost was but wasn't quite. I actually put it down for a couple weeks in the middle of the first novella and felt no particular compulsion to return to it, though in the end I'm glad I did. Andrea crafts a fascinating world, and though I've not read too many shifter books, I've seen enough of it in pop culture to say safely that her concept of the shifter felt quite unique to me. The infecteds live a brutal and unglamorous life and constantly battle both the impression that this isn't the case, and widespread hatred. Shifting is a disease spread by sexual or blood contact, much like AIDS. Also much like AIDS, it's an eventual death sentence (the stress of shifting eventually kills people), it carries a huge social stigma, people blame "the gays" for it, and children can even be born with it via infected mothers. It's a wonderful social commentary, subtle enough not to leave you feeling bludgeoned over the head, clear enough that you can't miss it.

My single biggest issue with these novellas was the writing itself. The author could really have done with a stronger editorial hand, for while her writing in general is solid, she is also extremely prone to tangents and repetition. I actually came to dread the introduction of new characters, because every single one, no matter how minor (random prostitute on the street, random barista behind a counter, you name it), got full descriptive treatment, generally several sentences long and almost universally pointless. I don't need precise physical descriptions of every person to wander on and off the page. And it happened so often that it really killed the pacing. I also thought the intro to the first novella was pretty weak (it was told from the POV of a minor character and meant to set up the mystery, but failed to draw me in), though by the end of the first novella, I didn't want to put it down. The weaving of the mystery in Infected was beautiful, the ending perfect, and the character development for Roan left me hungry to see what would happen next.

Prey starts off much stronger than Infected did, drawing me in right away. Again, it was told from the POV of a character about to be murdered, but it was much smoother, and even in her few short pages of life I was made to care about her. The pace of Prey was also much smoother and faster than Infected, the writing overall felt stronger, and while the glut of character description was still there, there were fewer random tangents where the author just went off and wrote a page about something completely irrelevant to the story. Overall I enjoyed Prey much more than Infected from a craft perspective, as if the author had really grown as a writer between the two pieces. Alas, I did have trouble keeping all the names straight in Prey--there was a big cast of characters involved in the unfurling of the mystery, and the author used their first and last names interchangeably, which made it very hard to keep track of who was who; just when I thought I remembered who one guy was, she'd call him by another name and I'd have to flip back and figure it out all over again. Still, there was a very satisfying conclusion to the mystery in the end. Despite that, the book ends on a distinct downer--an HFN at best--that felt kind of unnecessary to me, a bit like the author made the conscious decision to kick us in the teeth at the end. I respect that, from a craft perspective, it's not always realistic to have an HEA, and presumably the author made a conscious choice to remind us that even with the mystery solved it's not all rainbows and puppies. But in this particular case, I don't personally think that an HEA or an unblemished HFN would have affected the integrity of the story, and the ending as it's written left a very sour taste in my mouth.

That being said, if she writes more of Paris and Roan, I'll be reading it. The worldbuilding was wonderful, the characters multilayered, and Andrea makes us care about them deeply. Though there's quite a bit of ugliness in her world, and reasons to be depressed, there's also the kind of loving relationship that we could all only dream of, and some really fabulous humor, especially from Roan, the super-cynical detective at the heart of the books. (Favorite line? "There were so many good reasons for hating people on an individual basis that mass, generic hatred seemed idiotic. Hate a person for who they were, God knows he did, but for what they were? Moronic and lazy.")

If GR had half stars, I'd have given this one 3.5. If the editing had been sharper, I'd have given it 4, maybe even more; it's hard to tell how much more deeply I might have found myself sucked into the world if all the pacing problems hadn't gotten in the way, but I suspect the answer is "quite a bit." If you're not bothered by that sort of thing, and you love strong worldbuilding and strong characterization sexy shifters, you will almost certainly LOVE this book. Even if you are bothered by that kind of thing but love worldbuilding and characterization and shifters, you will almost certainly quite like the book. Read it and find out for yourself :)

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