



Blood on the Bayou

Stacey Jay

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The second book in a new urban fantasy series featuring mosquito-sized fairies with poisonous bites that drive humans insane.

It's only been three weeks since Annabelle helped solve the murder of Grace Beauchamp, and in the process, she discovered a secret world of invisible, magic-working people who have decided she might have what it takes to join their ranks.

As best as she can determine, Annabelle's attack by a group of fairies has infected her with paranormal ability she did not previously possess, including being able to mentally move objects and heal wounds. Her new abilities appear to have few negative side effects, aside from creepy dreams. But would that change if she stopped injecting herself with the mystery drug delivered to her by the even more mysterious Tucker, one of the Invisibles? Leery of trusting criminals with her health, Annabelle wishes she had someone she could talk to about the changes in her life. Enter Hitch, FBI agent and Annabelle's ex, who's back in Donaldsonville on an off-the-books investigation. Hitch suspects that there's a government-funded illegal lab that's developing a controversial fairy-killing spray that could adversely affect the existence of every living thing in the delta—including humans. And Hitch and Annabelle will have to find a way to work together if they're going to find a way to shut it down.

Blood on the Bayou Details

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Author : Stacey Jay

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From Reader Review Blood on the Bayou for online ebook

Dija says

The emotional tornado that is Annabelle's life continues in Blood on the Bayou. This book was just as painful and gut-wrenching to read as the first one, Dead on the Delta, and even more so because I was already familiar with Annabelle and felt her more strongly this time around.

Without a doubt, the best (and at times, worst) part of this series is Annabelle's character. The one word that most adequately describes her is "complex". You can't simply hate or love her; there's a world of gray between those two black and white extremes. Annabelle visibly shows a significant amount of character development in Blood on the Bayou, especially with respect to her self-esteem. While she does let too many people insult her, often to her face, she still generally has a pretty good perception on relationships. I never felt she was acting meek; depressed, yes, but submissive? Never.

(view spoiler)

This quote best shows what a long way Annabelle's come from the person she was in Dead on the Delta. Not only has she accepted what happened, she admits that it wasn't her fault, that she deserved better. And that it's time to move on and let the past go. (hide spoiler)] Watching Annabelle develop into a woman who can stand up for herself and doesn't take crap from anyone has been the one thing that has made reading this raw series bearable. I believe Annabelle's worth the emotional investment.

Now, onto the love interests:

My feelings for Hitch were a tangled mess throughout most of this novel and the previous one. But thanks to what an awesome human being he was towards the end of Blood on the Bayou (I'm being sarcastic, since you probably can't tell), I've firmly taken him out of the running for Annabelle's love. The dumbass doesn't deserve to even breathe same air as her. He comes with way too much emotional baggage, and that's one thing Annabelle really doesn't need more of.

I'm completely divided over Cane. He seems to genuinely care for Annabelle, but I doubt he'd be good for her in the long run. And her observation (view spoiler) seems pretty accurate given his behavior. So while I don't *hate* him, I certainly don't want Annabelle to end up with him either. He's too selfish for a lasting relationship. But some of his actions were so sweet and considerate, I'm really not sure. The jury's still out on him.

And finally, saving the best for last, Tucker. *He's* the one I'm ultimately rooting for, the one I adore to bits, the one that had better end up with Annabelle. He's smart, funny, understanding, and oh-so-sexy. His attitude was never condescending towards Annabelle and he seems to accept, and even love, who she is, including all the bad and messed-up parts, which is something that really can't be said for the other two.

Overall, Blood on the Bayou is just as intense and compelling as Dead on the Delta, with unexpected bits of humor thrown in. If you enjoyed the latter, then you'll love this one. I'm really, really looking forward to the sequel. ~~Only if Annabelle will end up with Tucker though, obviously.~~

Favorite quotes:

I smile. Just a little. He's a mess, but I have a soft spot for messes.
I have to. My self-image depends upon it.

(view spoiler)

The cast:

DISCLAIMER: The physical descriptions might not match; this is just how they appear in MY imagination.

Annabelle:

Hitch:

Cane:

Tucker:

For more reviews, visit my blog.

harlequin {Stephanie} says

I truly enjoyed this one.

With all good things there be a catch! We get a butt load of relationship drama that takes away from enjoyment of the plot & characters. It seems so unrealistic. Now she has three men that are hopelessly devoted to her. For reals?

Even though one has a baby on the way and the other has the equivalent of a latin super model pining for his attention, complete with two kids that he desperately wants. I am sold on Tucker. *Shame on me for being weak.*

Annabelle, please clean it up a bit or

Michelle, the Bookshelf Stalker Queen of the Undead says

Why do we love dysfunctional characters?

Is it because we can relate?

Is it because we believe that if THEY can survive, maybe we can?

Is it because we are warped and like to see other people suffer with life?

Who knows!

Annabelle is VERY dysfunctional. She has low self-esteem. She drinks too much, she loves too hard, and the monsters she battles in her real world don't compare to the demons she battles on the inside! Regardless, I love Annabelle.

In *Blood on the Bayou*, Annabelle's love life takes a turn (for the worse or for the better is for you to find out), her magic abilities are further explored, and the characters around her (human and/or otherwise) create havoc in Annabelle's quest for peace and normalcy.

We have not one, not two, but three central players, in Annabelle's messed up love life. Back for a return performance as boyfriend number 1 is Cane. In *Blood on the Bayou*, we find Annabelle exploring a possible future with Cane, only to unlock secrets about the man she thinks she loves which makes her doubt Cane's feelings and motivations behind the relationship.

Boyfriend number 2 is Hitch. I know, you THINK he is not a boyfriend since Hitch supposedly has a pregnant fiancée but in reality, Annabelle's feelings for Hitch are as strong as her feelings for Cane. Like Cane, Annabelle is discovering secrets in Hitch's closet that makes her doubt her own feelings for him AND whether she can trust him.

And finally, we have Tucker. Tucker's past is as invisible as his body. Don't worry. The reader learns plenty about Tucker but the revelations create more questions than answers. By far, Tucker is my favorite character, he's playful, mysterious and for the life of me, I can't figure out his motives.

OVERALL

I hate love triangles. I really do. That is why I'm shocked that I love this series. I think because Annabelle is so dysfunctional with a heart of gold, I can't help but be an Annabelle cheerleader, hoping she'll end up with the right guy, and live happily ever after. The problem is who is the right guy?

Blood on the Bayou is not all about the love-Bermuda-triangle. It also has non-stop action, and a storyline that revolves not only around the faeries, but an entirely new species is introduced. You'll have to read it to find out!

Thank you Shelley aka Gizmo's Reviews for allowing me to be a Guest Reviewer at your great blog! Check out this review (and Shelley's other reviews) at <http://gizmosreviews.blogspot.com/>

April says

(Originally posted @ CSI:Librarian.)

(Please Note: This review contains several spoilers relating to characters, but not to the overall plot.)

While *Blood on the Bayou* had a really neat plot and some engaging minor characters, it really, really let me down in terms of its main character, Annabelle Lee.

I am a very character-driven reader. Plots and world-building are awesome, but even then, unless I'm reading a book about the exciting adventures of a planet or plot-point, I need something else to go on. I need a character to connect to. That doesn't mean I have to become BFFs with the character. I'm not saying need to see their resume nor require them to adhere to a strict moral code, but I do prefer protagonists that have something --*anything*-- going for them. This is particularly true of Urban Fantasy where so many heroines are presented as absolute messes in terms of their personal life and emotional state.

I can understand the appeal of a messy character. I can also appreciate fictional private investigator or magic user types who come across as both sarcastic and self-deprecating while masking some kind of secret hurt that gets slowly revealed over the course of their series. Having low self-esteem, being an addict of some kind, or having a dark past isn't going to keep me from liking a character. I think having issues like that can be compelling. Successful examples for me would be Stacia Kane's Chess, Putnam, Lauren Beukes' Zinzi December, Ilona Andrews' Kate Daniels, and Diana Rowland's Angel Crawford. They don't all have the same range of problems by any stretch of the imagination, but their books/series are all focused on the ways they change and become more comfortable in their roles as well as with themselves. Yes, men become a part of all of their lives, but that isn't the end all be all of their existence.

In approaching *Blood on the Bayou*, I was aware that Annabelle was still quite a mess and not likely to make any improvements at a rapid pace because honestly she doesn't care enough about herself. Even knowing that, I figured *something* ultimately would change given that this is the second book in an on-going series. Therefore I was very disappointed when, just like in the first book, Annabelle didn't seem to care about herself on any level, constantly was looking for conflict to have with someone else, took very little responsibility for her actions, took advantage of various emotional attachments, and was apparently quite content cultivating a nice little garden of problems for herself.

With a character like Annabelle, my hope is usually a) that she or he will either be such an awesome force that I won't care about their personal hang-ups or shortcomings, b) I will be given insight that will allow me to have more empathy for him or her, or c) he or she will decide to possibly change their life for the better in some small, organic way over the course of several books.

Maybe this is expecting too much from a book or maybe it's expecting just the right amount from a novel. Jury's still out. Either way, character development would be sort of pivotal for a fictional someone with more issues than actual friends. The last thing I am interested in is how many guys or gals said heroine or hero can hook up with while ignoring their issues or so much as sorting out a single, solitary mess facing them outside of the main plot.

So imagine my horror when Annabelle went from having maybe one guy to having three guys that were into

her because... Well, that's the problem. I think I'm as likely to figure out the answer to that question as I am to figure out while every female character in Norway was in love with Jo Nesbø's Harry Hole.

What was also problematic for me in terms of Annabelle and her love interests was that one of the guys into Annabelle has a pregnant fiancée who was in a hospital and in danger of losing their baby. Until the plot got a move on, he spent a lot of time trying to get Annabelle to take him back because of their epic misunderstanding a long time ago. And he also thought her craziness is sexy. Another one of the guys was so in love with her that it is really depressing to read about. The right thing to do would have been to tell him it's over at some point, but instead Annabelle accidentally sort of intentionally strung him along for just about the entire book. And the third just was sort of there for most part but they have witty exchanges and he was hot and was also into her being a hot mess for no real reason.

I realize these issues won't trouble every reader and to many it will seem like I read this book the wrong way. But I can only speak to my experience which was full of frustration, bafflement, and disappointment. I got really sick and tired of the plot having to get put on pause for Annabelle and her love square, which really didn't hold my interest or make me feel all that emotionally invested. More importantly, I didn't feel like the characters were all that genuinely invested or that they would have been pursuing Annabelle had she not been the main character. Along those lines, I also got really fed up by how nothing seemed to get resolved with any of the three men for far too long. And I really just found myself fundamentally disliking all the decisions Annabelle made and all the approaches she took to any given situation.

Things got slightly better as the plot continued, and I did like the way the novel ended in terms of the plot as well as the minor characters especially Fern and Deedee. Along the way, there were a lot of quirky moments and the some of the humor worked for me. And, yes, Annabelle ultimately made some good decisions... but by then I felt like the only reason Annabelle was important to anyone in the book was because she was the main character and everything was from her point of view. The ways in which Annabelle seemed to be growing and changing didn't do much for me anymore than her love life did.

In conclusion, not for me. I have no desire to only read and review books where the main character has a clean bill of mental health, but I'm not a fan of stories where female characters are messes in need of unconditional support and a good therapist but instead have 3+ guys trying to hook up with them.

Related Review:

Dead on the Delta by Stacey Jay

Shelley says

Rating 4.0-4.5

Genre Urban Fantasy

Review

Blood on the Bayou once again takes us into the world of Stacey Jay, and her heroine Annabelle Lee. It has been 3 weeks since the events of *Dead on the Delta* and Annabelle is as dysfunctional as they come still with her pill popping, and heavy drinking.

It's been related that Annabelle and Stacia Kane's Chess Putnam could be best friends. In fact, it would be awesome to have a crossover short story featuring the two of them together solving the world's problems while holding off the men they seem to care about!

Annabelle is still technically on probation from her job at the Fairy Containment & Control where she is a fairy popper scooper. She also has to get used to the fact that she has to rely on injections to keep her from going crazy after she was bitten by killer fairies. LeLe is immune to the Fairy bites which make her a valuable quantity when it comes to finding out what they are up to and locating the Breeze manufacturers.

Since her attack by killer fairies, she finds that she needs The Big Man and his shots to keep her alive. Annabelle has been honing her newly acquired telekinesis skills and healing abilities she obtained in Dead on the Delta as well.

She also has her hands full with 3 men who would make most women drool with envy.

Hitch is back in town and once again looking for the person(s) responsible for killing his friend. Hitch, the FBI agent, and former lover of Annabelle, still portends to have feelings for her, and Annabelle herself isn't truly over him. Hitch finally understands that when Annabelle told him that something really awful happened to her at the hands of his brother, she meant it and he should have believed her. The problem with Hitch is that he is pretty much married to his partner and expecting a child with Stephanie who has more than a few secrets of her own.

Cain still has feelings for Annabelle, but he wants to get married and have tons of little ones to make his family happy; especially his mother. Cain also has a few things he needs to get over like the fact that his sister was a breeze seller, and will most likely turn into a zombie one day soon.

Tucker the invisible man is as mysterious and charming as they come. Of all the men that LeLe has feelings for; Tucker is by far the most interesting one as well as my personal favorite. He works for the Big Man, and could charm the pants of a toad at 50 paces. I can't help it. I adore Tucker and really hope that if and when there is a third novel in this book, that Tucker is LeLe's HEA.

I love this series and would encourage those who follow me, or love awesome UF stories, as well as those who follow Stacia Kane, to pick up this book and read it. You will not be sorry you did.

ARC provided by the publisher

mrsj says

Well, I tried.
But I can't. I can't love this book as much as everyone does.
So I guess I am one of the minority. *shrugs*

I have zero tolerance for low self-esteem characters who continue not to show much growth.
I have zero tolerance for messy love triangles.
I have zero tolerance for friends who overstep the boundaries.

In other words, this book is a mess to me.

It messed up my head, it messed up my feelings, it riled up my anger and I really hate the messy love triangles.

My rules:

- 1) You don't mixed up with unavailable man. (engaged and expecting a baby)
- 2) There's a reason for an ex-boyfriend to be an ex.
- 3) Don't string on the relationship with someone who called for a time out and saw him flirting with someone whom you deem as close and allow him to roll in your bed.
- 4) Don't use sex to get someone to hang on for their dear life.
- 5) No gay friends should call you a "slut" no matter how low self-esteem you have. NO BLOODY WAY!
The way he thinks he is right? He deserve a knock in the head and a kiss goodbye!!!
- 6) NO CHEATING!! NO NO NO!!!

Annabelle "messy" Lee low self-esteem is affecting me badly.

My heart goes to her for what happened but NO, I can't accept the mess she takes in.

The love triangles? You see, that is what I don't understand.

Is there a need for that?

It's pretty clear isn't it?

Hitch is history, he has someone else already and expecting a baby!

Cane is history since he wants a future that our dear Annabelle don't see she's a part of it. He is keeping secrets from her, being sent to her house after tipped off by Fern? OH PLEASE!!! And best part? She is sleeping with someone A LOT and has not end the relationship with him??

And Tucker. I don't know what to think about him but please, make her see the light in book 3!

Laura says

In some ways I really liked this book but it also bothered me somewhat. I really like the setting and the whole unique spin on the fairies. I like the fact that the minority now makes up the majority of the population and vice versa. I liked finally getting a brief glimpse of the Big Man and getting a little bit more information about Tucker. I liked that Annabelle decided to take some initiative regarding Deedee.

What I didn't like so much was that there were just too many love interests. I didn't think Hitch even needed to be in the story at all. His and Annabelle's relationship just needs to be over. That ship has sailed. They had six years during which they could have had a conversation about the truth of that horrible event from their past, but they didn't. Now Hitch has a pregnant fiancée. Anything between Annabelle and Hitch just feels like a shitty betrayal. There are enough characters in this series that any one of them could have asked for Annabelle's help with the cave and it wouldn't have changed the plot enough to matter. I also didn't like the fact that Stephanie's name was on one of the documents authorizing the experimentation on humans. It felt like a cheap shot taken in an attempt to let the reader off the hook for rooting for Hitch and Annabelle, if there were any who felt that way. I thought there was more than enough drama within the Cane, Tucker, Annabelle triangle anyway. I like Tucker just fine, nothing against him, but I felt like there was also a bit of a pro-Tucker anti-Cane vibe written into this particular installment. So many people were shoving Cane commitment in Annabelle's face and telling her she was undeserving of him that I had trouble not feeling smothered by it. I also felt like the interactions between Cane and Annabelle weren't nearly as entertaining as the ones between Annabelle and Tucker and it felt intentional somehow.

The back and forth between foe to friend to foe practically gave me whiplash in regard to Marcy. I really would like to see another book in the series because I really would like to figure out what is up with her and also to find out what happened with Amity.

I would probably rate this a little bit higher than three stars, if not for the fact that the editing process failed to catch the fact that Marcy's husband was referred to by the wrong name at the beginning of this book.

Christen (GoldiloxReads and Whimsify) says

Review coming a bit closer to release date, but I absolutely LOVED this book!!! It had everything I wanted and more and I adored every twist and turn!!! <3

Penny says

In all honesty, this book deserves 1.5 stars. Barely. But I'm felling generous today so 2 stars it is.

Where to start? It feels like Ms Jay wasn't even trying, like she didn't care about the characters and the series anymore. Almost like she phoned it in, drunk. There are so many typos it got my eye twitching right off. There's even a 'your're' where a 'your' should be, I kid you not. And our little MC, Anna-Belle Lee, is so inconsistent, so bi-polar, she's not even recognizable. One minute she loves this guy then she hates him then she loves two other guys and hates another. Then she's making out with the guy she really hates because he's so totally hot and she thinks he's the one she really likes, until five minutes later she doesn't. Then she knows she loves her not-quite-boyfriend and wants to commit to him always and forever. Until suddenly she doesn't and she's lusting after the guy she loathes, and wishing for her ex-boyfriend too. By the way, if you didn't notice there are three love interests in this book. Really.

Don't even get me started on the fairy lore. It's a disaster. Which is odd because I felt as though I had a fairly decent grasp on all that when reading the last novel. And it's impossible to discern who the bad guy is because everything we're told is a lie. Everything. Even at the end of the book I have no idea why any of what happened had to happen. There was no point, seriously. When all was said and done I had nothing left to do but count all the gigantic plot holes.

Lots more I want to say on this, and I may do so later, but I'm going to have to wrap this up since it's not so much fun typing this whole thing up while peddling away on a stationary bike.

I don't recommend this book to anyone.

Rhianna says

The Fearless Series Every UF Fan Should Read

Being immune to Fairy venom should be awesome, but for Annabelle Lee it's really been a curse. Once again called to duty helping investigate a murder she winds up once more tangled in between the man she once loved and the one she's still trying to figure out. But Annabelle can barely take care of herself, or keep

Gimpy, the cat she's unwittingly adopted, from getting into all sorts of dietary disasters let alone settle down. With her new-found powers and the mysterious Invisibles who've marked her as their own she's ass deep in alligators with no one to trust as she finds out they are the only ones hiding things.

Trying so hard not to give anything away with my sum-up there, sorry guys, this book was just too good to reveal more than the official blurb. I know there are a lot of readers who didn't like the first book because they found Annabelle's alcoholism and irresponsibility off-putting. But that is what makes her truly a character to love and root for in my opinion. She's just as flawed as ever this time around but now she's trying to do something about it. I rarely connect so personally to a character that I want to smack them upside the head like they're family and somehow Annabelle continues to be that pain-in-the-neck cousin (who doesn't have one of those?) I want to yell at. Of course, I mean that in the most good way possible because she gets me emotionally invested in her story!

And what a story it is! The plot gets so thick it's swamp water this time around. There's a whole lot more to what we learned about the fairy mutations that gets revealed and with it there's a lot to look forward to when the next installment comes out. The demi-love-triangle—I can't quite call it a true love triangle with the circumstances—gets a little more complicated with Tucker adding to the hottie-pool. I definitely wanted more Tucker and Jay delivers but good. If only we could all be as blessed as Annabelle and have three sexy dudes like Hitch, Cane, and Tucker vying for our affection!

The only part of the book I didn't like was that it had to end. The pace is fast, I usually struggle with books over the 350 page mark and BLOOD ON THE BAYOU managed to fly by for me. I really hope to see more from this series because it's strangely under-noticed considering how original it is. If you enjoyed Rachel Vincent's Shifters series, enjoy Stacia Kane's Downside Ghosts, or like Mercy Thompson this is on the same level and in my humble opinion a MUST-READ for anyone calling themselves an urban fantasy fan. This series has the gritty realism laced with dark humor that makes this my favorite genre and one of my favorite series, hands down.

Cathy says

I still really like this series a lot. This one wasn't as dark as the first one in some ways. People who had issues with Annabelle and her imperfections (i.e. drunkenness) might be more comfortable with her this time around because she is trying to clean up her act a bit. But I like this imperfect woman and her struggles are a big part of what make the series interesting and different for me and I hope she doesn't become too idealized too quickly. Her struggles and imperfections are what I related to in the first book.

Annabelle has had a lot to deal with. First, there is the basic premise of this world, it's a really stressful and frightening place to live in in many way, a sort of apocalyptic meets urban fantasy setting. A lot of people who live in the fairy-infested area where Annabelle lives have become addicted to sleeping pills because they have anxiety issues and nightmares - who wouldn't? And then there's her history. She's insecure, she drinks too much (less in this book), she too needs sleeping pills to deal with her crazy life (who doesn't?), oh, and did I mention that she's insecure? She's also dealing with having been rejected by her family, not trusted and dumped by the man she loved after his brother raped her, and probably has some depressive or anxiety issues (my diagnosis, just a guess). She's kind of a mess. But she's also smart as a whip (a former med student), brave, loving, generous and funny, loves good food (hot wings!), and generally the kind of gal that I'd like to be pals with.

As for this book specifically, in an attempt to be spoiler free, I'll just say that it was a study in betrayal and secrets. By the middle of the book it at least appeared that everyone that Annabelle ever cared about, except Deedee, had betrayed her. She felt completely isolated and alone. Her lovers, the people she'd come to think of as family, and even her bosses, had secrets that hurt her feelings and some of which threatened her life. There was a lot going on in this book but I really liked the way it all wove together. Now that I'm thinking about it, I never once rolled my eyes and thought that it was too much coincidence, or that certain people shouldn't have had any reason to know each other, none of the things that irritate me sometimes on other books. There was one person who did have a big secret that was revealed that could have been an eye-roller but it was built up to enough that it fine.

I really liked the layers that were revealed about the fairies in this book. I wondered in the first book about the the author's use of the word fairy for the creatures since they seemed to be just mindless insect-like animals at first. But I really enjoyed everything that was revealed about them in this book. And Grandpa Slake was just so creepy. I was intrigued by the hints of information about the Gentry and I'm looking forward to seeing how that plays out more in the next book.

It wasn't a perfect book. I was kind of surprised at some of the choices the author made when it came to the romances. I'm not sure Annabelle came off as positively as she could have. (Not that the guys looked so good either, let me tell you!) And I'm not quite sure about the overall change in Annabelle's character. Not that she isn't still screwed up, she's still making mistakes and drinking a bit too much, but she felt a bit too suddenly heroic, and yet judgmental of the guys' mistakes at the same time, it just felt odd sometimes. But I'm chalking it up to second book growing pains. Overall I like this world and this character and the author's writing very much and I'm looking forward to book three.

Tracy says

Bad Moon Rising

Life in Donaldsonville, Louisiana may have settled down in the three weeks since Annabelle Lee discovered...so to speak...who had killed a child and left her body in the bayou, but that doesn't mean that Annabelle's life in any way resembles what it had been before the revelations, losses, and painful realizations bulldozed her body, heart, and mind during that investigation. Hey, at least she still has the booze. Thankfully, she still has the booze.

Her relationship with Cane is still in limbo and she's got psychic abilities she barely understands. A brand-spankin' new Harley is stuck in her kitchen, stocked with the shots that will keep her from turning into a bunny-smashing psychopath. She's knows secrets about the sort of people who would whistle a jaunty tune while executing her in horrible and bloody ways if she ever reveals them. Oh yeah, and she's being randomly stalked by a tall, dark, and sinfully gorgeous man who she never sees coming...because most of the time he's invisible. Toss in a visit from her ex-boyfriend Hitch, who has come back to town to get her help investigating the death of a friend, and Annabelle's plate is more than full, it's overflowing and spilling angst, confusion, and tension all over the place.

Helping Hitch is complicated. Being with Hitch is complicated. She still loves him. She doesn't want to, but she does. She also doesn't want him to die, and as she's the only Immune he knows in town, one of the rare five percent of the human population who is immune from the deadly bite of the mutated fairies in the bayou, helping him is something she feels compelled to do. She agrees to head back into the bayou and figure out the connection - if there is one - between smuggled goods, men who appear to have been kidnapped and

tortured by government operatives, caves where mysterious goings on have been reported, and fairies who, despite all prior knowledge, can speak. Fairies who, despite her immunity, seem quite intent on killing her ugly.

And Annabelle is going to realize that the past three weeks, when so much of her life got tilted upside down and flipped around and around, were positively Utopian compared to what's coming next. That is, if she survives what's coming next.

~*~

I liked Stacey Jay's introduction to the flawed and damaged Annabelle Lee in her series debut, *Dead on the Delta*. It was exactly the sort of dark, deadly urban fantasy that gets my Happy Reader lights flashing. Annabelle herself was a bit more full of self-loathing and apathy than I found completely appealing for a heroine, and the book was a bit more heavy on the emotional angst than I prefer, but I loved the nearly post-apocalyptic world that Jay created and the plot was spot-on awesome.

Blood on the Bayou is better. In every way.

Still horribly and wonderfully flawed but much less apathetic and self-destructive, Annabelle Lee has matured in this installment. She was far more sympathetic to me as she struggles with a case that may end up ripping away from her everything she thought still true at the end of the last book. Life is definitely not full of fluffy puppies and dewy daffodils in Donaldsonville, and the Bayou is as deadly as it is beautiful, but Annabelle seems to attract the sort of horrific trauma that could keep a cadre of therapists in Jaguars and BMWs for a decade. Man, that makes for some deeply disturbing and fabulously entertaining reading!

I have to admit, I was Team Hitch in the first book. I've never quite warmed up to Cane, though he seems like a nice enough guy. That's the problem, actually. Annabelle was in such a wretchedly unhappy place in her life in the first book that frankly, I thought Cane was far too good for her and didn't deserve the drama that cloaks Annabelle like a death shroud. Hitch, on the other hand, has always been screwed up, though he hides it, and I felt for the pain of Annabelle's unresolved first love. Not to mention, after the shit Hitch pulled when they split up all those years ago, I felt he deserved the healthy helping of angst that would come from being with Annabelle. Twisted of me, but true.

Then I read this book and went from Team Hitch to Team Burn-Hitch-In-Effigy in six point two chapters (or less). I was thrilled that the one major unresolved issue between the two of them was finally addressed, though, and the scene in which it was dealt with was perfectly dripping with pathos. That being said, had I been Hitch's right hand fairy-repellent in this book, I would have shot him myself and washed my hands of him. Weak, desperate, wishy-washy, Hitch is an emotional quagmire that Annabelle doesn't deserve to suffer. I had moments where I actually hated him and would have heartily enjoyed his painful, screaming death.

As for Tucker...well...he's my favorite secondary character in this series so far. For more reasons than the potential horizontal action he could have with Annabelle, too. I love the mystery surrounding his past, his personality, and his motives and loyalties. I love his irreverent front and the depth of his awareness of Annabelle. The chemistry between them - not just sexual, but character-wise - is fantastic. And he steals every scene he's in. I want more and more and more of him.

There was a lot going on in this book. Jay certainly doesn't skimp on plot points and story layers. I found the fairy stuff and the ramifications of Annabelle's mysterious transformation more engaging and compelling

than Hitch's investigation, but the threads were woven together with a cohesion that balanced out the personal/relationship threads and held my interest throughout.

There were a couple of weird things though. Maybe I missed something, but Hitch's FBI partner and significant other Stephanie - thankfully not actually present in this book, because I liked her in the previous book about as much as I like scooping cat poop - is referred to as Hitch's fiancée in the last book and in the beginning of this one. Then later she's referred to as his wife by both Hitch and Annabelle. More than once. It wasn't clear to me if there was a reason for that. I was reading an ARC, though, so maybe that isn't in the final product.

Then there's the final chapter of the book. I can't understate how very much I disliked it, and it's the sole reason I'm giving this book four stars instead of five. After the pulse-pounding action, drama, danger, terror, and angst of all twenty-nine preceding chapters, chapters that forced me to bleed with Annabelle, mourn and cry and rage with her as she did, sweat and scream and fight beside her, I was suddenly and ruthlessly shoved six weeks into the future and had almost every major plot point and story element summed up or capped off in Annabelle's thoughts preceding an event that itself popped up out of nowhere considering where the lives of the involved parties were in the last spot they were mentioned.

I was more than a little gobsmacked by it all, to tell you the truth. Not only do I find that sort of summary resolution dénouement to be a horrible plot device that cheats readers out of the emotional triumphs and tragedies that would have evolved from several of those points being written out in real time, but in this case in particular, several of the items wrapped up in the fewest words possible didn't even make sense. One major plot point was glossed over as if it had no consequence at all. I felt like I was being force-fed a Happy for Now ending that diminished the excellent storytelling leading up to it.

Up to that point, this was a fantastic book on every level, one that delighted even as it tormented and traumatized. There's so many things I like about Annabelle. She's so wonderfully flawed and yet, in this book, she's trying in a way that I felt was missing in the first book. I'm dying to find out how the revelations and developments in this one serve to enhance and evolve her character as her journey continues. Plus, more Tucker. I definitely need more Tucker. There just ain't no bad to be had there.

~*~*~*~

Reviewed for One Good Book Deserves Another.

MISS VAIN says

But is it really cheating if you're not officially together? Does an invisible man count as a man? If a penis you can't see falls in the forest is it really a penis at all?

So everyone that knows me is all too familiar with my instant love with a fascinating new dark and gritty series about killer fairies called **Dead on the Delta**. Therefore when the opportunity presented itself to read and review the second installment called **Blood on the Bayou** I was elated with joy and devoured that book in one night it was so exhilarating.

*I smile. Just a little. He's a mess, but I have a soft spot for messes.
I have to. My self image depends on it.*

What I love about Stacey Jay's writing skills is that she takes a heroine with issues and gives you the desire to reach out your hand, befriend her and build her up. Poor Annabelle has coping issues, she lacks self esteem, has been abandoned by her family, abuses alcohol, desires the love of someone she can't have, and sometimes self destructive behavior is her middle name. All those vices and hangups in Annabelle's life I find endearing, and But don't let that fool you, in case that's not as endearing to you she comes with many redeeming qualities as well. She kind, caring, feisty, witty, honorable, dependable, and philanthropic.

"I'm not going to sleep with you."

Maybe not tonight."

"Not any night. I'm swearing off men."

"Is this like the time you swore off booze?" he asks with a grin. "How long did that last? A day?"

"A day and a half," I grumble.

Blood on the Bayou begins three weeks after the events that occurred in Dead on the Delta. Annabelle takes us once again on a scary and dangerous adventure investigating an illegally established drug facility distributing Breeze. Fairy Poop or more commonly referred to as Breeze, is an unlawful mind altering substance used to get high and can ultimately lead to health issues as well as an untimely slow and debilitating death. Since Annabelle has recently acquired a telekinesis abilities as well as the ability

She comes equipped with three Achilles heels; Her on again off again bf Cane, Her ex bf Hitch and Tucker her Dirty Little Secret.

And then he's kissing me, rough and wild and abandoned, like we're in a secret underground lab that could explode any minute and this might be the last kiss we ever share with anyone.

Well the devastatingly gorgeous **Hitch** is back in all his self righteous glory. He's come back to Donaldsonville to investigate the illegal Breeze factory, and needs Annabelle's help to do so. Annabelle is the easiest to penetrate the facility since she is immune to the deadly fairy bite. He's left behind his pregnant fiancé for work, and we discover that his relationship with Stephanie might not be a lovely bed of roses as Annabelle feared. We finally get to see a vulnerable side of Hitch, and I'll admit it's glorious, and I melt when it shows up. He's just as tortured of a soul as poor Annabelle, yet he has just mastered the skills of hiding his emotions and fears, until he reveals his emotional side. It's obvious these two are hot mess together and they just can't seem to fully move on from each other. This is one train wreck i cant help but watch.

"Crazy." He says, as if he's been reading my mind, following my thoughts through the maze of pointlessness and gloom. "You're crazy. You've always have been. And I'm tired of pretending I don't find crazy sexy as hell."

Then there's **Cane** her delicious on again, off again boyfriend. He wants more, but clearly Annabelle isn't capable of having the relationship he desires with her. Poor pitiful Cane he's still suffering from the sad loss he suffered in Dead on the Delta, and hes ready to settle down, hes got a great police job, most females can't help but desire him, and yet the one he wants is so far away. We see a desperate side of him and it makes me wonder does he love Annabelle, or does love being in love?! Could she be easily replaced by another woman, if she were willing to be more domesticated than Annabelle.

**"You're a distant cousin, my parents think you're trash, and I've never met you in my life, " I say.
"You've got a shady past that I'm guessing involves some jail time and I'll be advising my friends not to walk alone with you after dark, or loan you money, or be that nice to you if they can help it."**

He laughs. "Sounds perfect." I roll my eyes and push off down the street. "Stay out of trouble Red."

"Suck it, Bubba," I call over my shoulder.

Tucker is sexy, mysterious, and remains Annabelle's Dirty Little Secret. She still knows so little about him, but desires to know more of him nonetheless. Since her attack by killer fairies, she finds herself needing The Big Man's shots to keep her alive, and so she finds herself dependent on Tucker. Annabelle, has been honing her newly acquired telekinesis skills and healing abilities she obtained in Dead on the Delta when she was bitten by killer fairies. What I loved about Tucker is that is his own way he's dependable, and it also helps that he has invisibility skills. Luckily we get a good dose of Tucker in Blood on the Bayou, because there's a lot more to him than the glimpse we get in Dead on The Delta.

I have no doubt she's using him. But maybe he's okay with that. Maybe he'll sleep with anything with boobs-even if they're fake and once nursed a child only a few years younger than he is--and I shouldn't have been even a little flattered that he tried to get into my panties yesterday.

I absolutely loved every bit of this book!! It keep you guessing up until the very end. There's no denying that I love a tortured heroine or hero in my books, and Stacey Jay has delivered! If you enjoy dark, gritty Urban Fantasy with a heroine you can't help but cheer for, then the Annabelle Lee series will be your newest treasure.

"I'm Tucker, Master of Your Vagina."

ARC provided by the publisher

Like what you see here, check out my reviews at: <http://MissVainsParanormalFantasy.com>

Jen Davis says

I am one of those people who judges a story based on how I feel when it's over. Yes, I value the journey, but if I'm not satisfied with the destination, the whole thing is damn near ruined. This book is a perfect example of a story destroyed by an unsatisfactory conclusion. I really enjoyed it. I was invested 100% in the characters and the outcome. And then the last chapter happened, prompting me to curse out loud and then stalk Twitter for someone to listen to me vent.

I'll start at the beginning. The book picks up precisely where *Dead on the Delta* left off. Annabelle is on suspension from her job with the Fairy policing agency and she has agreed to help her ex-boyfriend Hutch solve the murder of an FBI agent. She is on a break from her relationship with Cane. And she is trying to get a grip on her new-found powers.

As the story progresses, we learn that there is a lot more to Hutch's case than he first revealed. He has his own reasons for the investigation, but they're honorable. Working together, Hutch and Annabelle grow closer. Especially once he learns how badly he misjudged her when they first broke up. Just like in the first book, I found myself torn between Hutch and Cane. Annabelle clearly loves them both, but in different ways she can't even admit to herself. And they both love her. The complications are compounded by Hutch's pregnant fiancée and Cane's secrets and ultimatums. But regardless, I waited patiently to see where Annabelle's heart would eventually land her.

In the meantime, the danger is growing and so are Annabelle's new gifts. Suddenly, she can communicate with the fairies and their message is deadly. Add that to the constant threat from the Big Man and Hutch's undercover mission, and I was on the edge of my seat. For the first 3/4's of the book, I didn't want to put it down.

But things started to go awry toward the end. And I swear to you that someone else came along and wrote the last chapter, because: It. Makes. No. Sense. Annabelle makes bizarre choices. This quasi-epilogue thumbs its nose at everything we've been building towards. It doesn't make sense for Hutch, given what he learns during the climax. And it doesn't make sense for Annabelle, who can barely keep a cat alive, to take on a responsibility she has no business accepting. The answer to her love life... is insulting. Insulting to anyone who has given a damn throughout the course of the past two books. Not to mention, it makes our heroine look like a completely selfish horn-dog.

I think I'd be less upset if I didn't enjoy the early parts so much. It had so far to fall and it crashed and burned spectacularly. I don't know how to rate it. The first half was a B+. The last chapter was an F.

**ARC Provided by Pocket Books*

Jamie says

I smile just a little. He's a mess, but I have a soft spot for messes. I have to. My self-image depends upon it.

Intelligent, witty, edgy, intriguing, articulate, crisp, eloquent, stylistic...the list can go on and on. You can see ~~my fan-girl squealing~~ how much I respect this author.

If you haven't read Stacey Jay's **Dead on the Delta**, RUN to the nearest bookstore and buy yourself a copy. If you have, then you need to immediately read her follow-up, **Blood on the Bayou**. You *will not* be disappointed. To say that I LOVE this series would be an understatement.

Blood on the Bayou takes place soon after the events of **Dead on the Delta**. The man-eating fairies are still causing trouble, and Annabelle Lee is still reeling from the discoveries at the end of Delta. Annabelle is not your typical heroine. She's tough, yet vulnerable. Mouthy, yet insecure. Intelligent, yet untrusting. She is still drinking a little too much, but her sleeping pill and alcohol consumption has definitely decreased in this

book. Her only sleep pill popping behavior is seen at the very beginning of this book. Annabelle is trying to be the person that she wants to be, and jumping those hurdles as she reaches them. This book takes Annabelle on a journey of self-realization and growth where she begins to learn her self-value.

This book also explores loyalty and trust in-depth. Who should the characters really trust? Is there something going on behind the scenes? Can you even trust the ones that profess their love for you? Do your friends really have your best interest at heart?

Stacey Jay has an incredible way with words. She writes quick, witty and intelligent dialogue for her characters.

But maybe I'd be okay right now if I'd had a nice, calm sandwich before bed instead of a few beers and extra cheesy nachos, topped off with extra-strength Benadryl, in the hopes that Alcohol and Antihistamine would heroically join forces and fight back the evil duo of Jalapeno Sauce and Stupidity allowing me to snag a few hours of REM sleep.

Tucker makes an appearance early on in this book. He is the sexy, charming, country boy we only got a glimpse of in the previous book. The banter between Annabelle and Tucker is fun and effortless. Annabelle is obviously attracted to Tucker, and he seems to be very interested in her. The following piece of banter is very tongue and cheek, but shows an example of Tucker and Annabelle in action.

He smiles. "I thought you gave up on the amateur detective stuff."

"Why would you think that?"

"Libby almost killed you."

"Aw." I purse my lips. "You sound like you care."

"Would have been a shame. You're a fine piece of ass."

"And you're ridiculously good looking."

Hitch is a large part of this book, too. The plot revolves around Annabelle helping Hitch to infiltrate a scary drug facility. Why is Annabelle involved? Because she has the local connections, she's immune to fairy bites, and she can't refuse Hitch. Hitch evolves a lot in this book. He is obviously still attracted to Annabelle, and the tension between Annabelle and Hitch does not let up throughout this entire book. We find out, through an intense encounter with the Junkyard Kings, that Hitch is *every bit as much of a mess* as Annabelle. Hitch learns a secret Annabelle's been keeping from him and is devastated with the truth. He's not angry with Annabelle, but is disgusted with himself.

"And you loved me. Even the parts I hated. It felt...too good."

Hitch is openly questioning his relationship with his fiancée, Stephanie, and is very conflicted over his resurgence of feelings for Annabelle. Hitch has made a lot of mistakes with Annabelle, but I truly believe that his life is more of a mess than Annabelle's by the middle of this book. He's losing trust in his job, his feelings for his fiancée, and his place in his world.

"I don't want to be the man I'm becoming, and I can't be the man I was," he says. "I don't know what

to be or believe anymore. But I know I love you.”

Hitch makes some very bad decisions in this book, but I have a soft-spot for him. He’s paying big time for those decisions.

Cane is back in this book, too. He is still waiting on his Annabelle, but is suffering from what happened to his sister in the previous book. Cane, himself, is not sure whom to believe or trust as the plot develops. He also makes a big mistake regarding Annabelle.

The Big Man is also present in this book. We learn more about this scary, powerful and invisible character. He seems to be in charge of a lot of things down in the Bayou. He is Annabelle’s savior, as well as the person she most fears. The Big Man seems to think that Tucker and Annabelle should have some sort of relationship, and Tucker even admits that to Annabelle at one point. But my questions remain - *who should Annabelle trust? Is everything as it appears? What other secrets are her friends and acquaintances keeping from her? Who is really in charge of the super secret Bayou drug facility?* There are too many questions left at the end of this books for it to be the last in this series.

Stacey Jay has created an intense, interesting and engaging world. She kept me guessing throughout the entire book. Just when I thought I had things figured out, she pulled the proverbial rug out from under me. I would urge **all** urban fantasy lovers to read this series. I think you’ll fall in love with Annabelle and the cast of characters in this intriguing version of Louisiana. **Stacey Jay is a great talent and it would be a shame to lose Annabelle after only two books.**

I’ll end this with another awesome quote from this book. I’ve left out the involved characters’ names to avoid spoiling this.

I can’t believe _____strapped *explosives* to _____’s chest. What the *hell* does she think this is? Some 1980’s spy movie? An episode of fucking *MacGyver*?
