



Unacceptable Risk

Kaje Harper

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Simon Conley was born a werewolf, making him one of a tiny minority in a sea of vanilla humans. The safety of the pack lies in absolute secrecy, sometimes violently enforced. In a species where pack-members are born and not made, being gay is considered a perversion. So when Simon falls in love with a human man, he's twice damned. Even his Alpha's grudging tolerance may not be enough to shield him from the hatred of the other top wolves. Then his lover Paul stumbles across pack secrets Simon was sworn to keep, and if the pack finds out, they may both end up dead.

Unacceptable Risk Details

Date : Published October 14th 2011 by MLR Press (first published October 11th 2011)

ISBN : 9781608204656

Author : Kaje Harper

Format : ebook 330 pages

Genre : Romance, M M Romance, Fantasy, Paranormal, Shapeshifters, Contemporary

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Jo ★The Book Sloth★ says

4 Lemon Cream Donut Stars

Simon is a werewolf. Unluckily for him he is also gay, something that not only is unusual for his kind but it is also punishable by death usually. Although he has long ago skipped the bullet of an authorised execution, some of his pack-mates aren't happy with that decision and after several beatings over the years it seems like the time has come when he is left almost dead in the middle of the road.

But as luck would have it the incoming truck sees him on time to stop from hitting him and the man jumping to help him is also a veterinarian who will help him heal his wounds. Too bad Simon can't tell him what he is because if there is one law in the pack that no one is allowed to break it is that the safety and secrecy of the pack is above all and anyone threatening their exposure is killed. Can Simon start something meaningful with Paul without exposing himself and without putting the man who saved his life in danger just for knowing him?

I picked up this book because I want to explore the M/M genre a little more without going out of what I like, which is relatively light romance with a heavy dose of paranormal. So after searching around for a bit I saw this months old recommendation and thought why not start there?

I liked this book. It was sweet and fun and the drama never reached critical levels. Simon, despite the abuse he has suffered in his pack, is a quite light-hearted guy that never lost his sense of humor or his determination to defend his choices. I liked how he never once wavered from what he wanted and went at it with relentless focus.

Paul was a sweetheart. Dedicated to his work, with a genuine love for what he did and a heart a mile long. Learning you like guys for the first time can't be easy but he took it well although he did need some time to fully accept it. I liked how he didn't jump in happiness at the idea because it gave a more realistic feeling to the book. He still accepted his sexuality pretty easily though but the fact that he already was so socially awkward but with a very open mind made it believable.

I also liked the paranormal aspect of the book. The werewolves don't have any freaky superpowers, they aren't super-strong or super-fast and they can't talk into each other's minds. They are just a bunch of guys with a genetic mutation that allows them to turn into wolves. The pack structure and rules are quite rigid and old fashioned but it seems like things are changing.

I did think the book was kind of slow at some points. Not enough for me to lose interest but definitely enough to notice and reduce a star. The writing was very good though and the story compelling. I'm definitely reading the rest of the books.

Macky says

If this was Review-a-Vision then you'd be blinded by a grin the size of the Grand Canyon because right now I'm one very happy reviewer and feeling even more so because I know I've got three more books - one novel and two 'interlude' shorts - to read and review from this brilliant Werewolf series by Kaje Harper. What's even better is I get to read them for free. Yaay...How cool is that!

I've been reading M/M for just over two years and for some strange reason have only just got around to reading Kajes books. I can't believe I waited so long! Before striking gold with this series I'd not long ago read 'The Rebuilding Year' a standalone contemporary romance that I loved, and then because I enjoyed that so much read the first book in her wonderful series 'Life Lessons' that also wowed me, so I was intrigued to see if she could impress me with a series set around a genre that to be honest I've become more than a little jaded with ...

So, colour me VERY impressed.

Loved, loved, loved it! Probably the most realistic take on Werewolves that I've ever come across. Nothing over the top or beyond belief, this story almost made me believe that unbeknown to us humans, Werewolves are living amongst us, working alongside us and living their lives quietly and secretly, just hiding below the radar and keeping themselves to themselves. It was believable and totally engrossing.

"We're a rare species, trying to survive surrounded by millions of humans. We don't have super strength, or immortality, or mental powers like in the movies. We survive by not being seen."

"But, on the down side, that means no superpowers. If neither man nor a wolf can do something, odds are we can't either. If we are magic, there are a few things I wish the wizard had added in."

The world building around the Were's is brilliant. The pack mentality is there and the mate bond that of course we've come to expect from wolf lore but this has little to do with full moons or rampant flesh eating monsters with claws and big teeth! They heal fast, live quite a bit longer than humans, have enhanced senses and shift of course but Kajes wolves are more dangerous to each other than the humans they hide from.

"And the pack lived by rules, fiercely enforced and unbreakable"

So when Paul stops to pick up an injured Simon in his wolf form one night, little does he know how his life is going to change.

Simon is a funny, warm and loving character. I adored him. His status within the pack is tenuous because he's gay, having talked his way out of a death sentence because of it, he's barely tolerated by the rest of the wolves and although he tries to live his life without getting too involved, is caught up in pack politics, as a faction led by the Alphas evil second and ex enforcer Karl, tries to take over the pack using Simon as a catalyst. Falling in love with Paul, who he (and his wolf) recognises as his mate, puts them both in danger....please read rest of review at <http://sidlove.wordpress.com/2013/05/...>

Bubbles Huntly Honest & Direct Opinions says

I don't really know what to say. Its not a bad book, nicely written but didn't hold my attention. I never really warmed up to Paul though I mostly liked Simon I didn't really see them going together as a couple.

Then the first half of the book was boring. Like nothing happened besides the same boring thing over and over. They would get close, Paul would pull away, we spent the day with both of them at work thinking about each other blah blah it was like that cycle through the first half. I got really bored with them at work doing nothing. i kept putting this down and i think i started and finished three other books before making it through half of this one. Second half was much better but still never really got me that into the story

Also the very descriptive female porn watching scene could have done without that. I think i would have liked it more if first half would have had more going on besides excessive details of their jobs or if parts of the first half where just cut out of the story.

Ami says

I have only discovered Kaje Harper in August 2011 -- and in that short span of time, she has bursted into my list of favorite authors. You might want to check another review from MandyM, whom I share a similar opinion with regarding this book

Unacceptable Risk is definitely a breath of fresh air, in a clutter of M/M shifter books that I have read (and yes, I love me shifter books :p).

One, there is no story of those "You're my mate, so let's go have sex and seal the deal" theme. Simon (the werewolf) doesn't immediately think of Paul (the vet) as his mate. The two guys actually take time to explore what can happen between them, and what mate-bond entails. Even if they arrive in that finish line under forced circumstance, I still find it believable.

It's also a gay-for-you story, since Paul has never even thought that he *could* swing that way before Simon. So it's the second reason why this is a fresh air ... that Paul also takes time to see what his attraction means. He even tries to check out straight porn and comparing to gay porn! I find that fun to read :)

And what other thing that makes this book a winner? The whole viciousness of the werewolf pack. Somehow, it's great to read about a pack where there are actual fights to claim the position. The fight in the end is a climax I welcome. Pack is not always just fun, and the whole pack politic reminds me of the fun I read of Patricia Briggs's or Ilona Andrews's series. Oh, and even if I don't think Aaron is a perfect Alpha name, dang if he doesn't (borrowing Mandy's word here) have the "Hawke" vibe (referring to my beloved Alpha on Nalini Singh's Psy/Changeling) series.

I do have a couple of niggles though. One, I cringe on the "baby" and "sugar" terms of endearment (at least the baby thing is not overused). And two, OMG, who makes the HIDEOUS cover!?!?!?

Gigi says

Loved it! Review shortly.

Just read this a second time. Will review this time!

Vio says

I don't read that many shifter books most don't appeal or hold my interest for long so imagine my surprise when I finally stumbled (gently encouraged) upon Unacceptable Risk. I am delighted to say this was a fabulous and interesting story with a nice bit of intrigue and suspense, especially the politics and hierarchy of the pack.

Paul was an adorable geek and thankfully devoid of the sulky (hold a grudge) attitude and major angst. His relationship with Simon wasn't perfect and they had to work at it which was stressful and tense at times. They were cute I loved how they did not jump into bed straight away and have sex and were not instantly mated.

You actually feel them slowly falling in love and getting to know each other with kisses and tender embraces a nice lovely romantic connection. Yeah I am a hopeless romantic but this worked out so much better for me than the instant sex scenario.

Now to Aaron wow what an alpha he is going to be strong, fair and sexy the fight for control of the pack was both exciting and tense. So I am eagerly awaiting to see how his story unfolds and who his mate is going to be!

Susan says

M/M Bingo

Round 8 - Week 2

"Best Gay Shifters"

3.5 stars

So...shifters.

I decided to finally take part in the Goodreads M/M Romance Group's Bingo game this round. (For those who aren't familiar with bingo, check out the info [HERE](#).) In any case, I'm trying to challenge myself this year with more categories and genres and stuff beyond the contemporary cop/cowboy book or my easy-to-please need for YA. This week's round was "Best Gay Shifter Romance" and I had to select from a predetermined list.

Some background...shifters just...don't do it for me. Maybe it's the Twilight thing. I don't know. I just don't have an urge or desire to read about them...and for some reason, my mind always associates shifters with...bad odor. ha! (I can't even explain it myself). I've read one M/M shifter book that I liked ("Until Forever Comes" by Cardeno C), but that was shifter and vampire. I can kinda deal with that.

Unacceptable Risk is by one of my favorite authors...one of my go-to's...Kaje Harper. Sadly, it starts already with the handicap that I don't like shifters. And then, well, it pairs a shifter with a human. And then, well, the human meets the shifter in wolf form first (the human is a veterinarian) and there's some weird bond there already forming. And I'm thinking blech...beastiality. So, let's say, this book starts already at maybe a -1 star rating. (sorry!)

But then Kaje Harper works her magic.

The story is about Paul, a vet, and Simon, a gay shifter who is constantly at risk because of a pack who doesn't welcome him. Seems bigotry and hate are prevalent in all societies, unfortunately. And the book takes us not only through a growing relationship, but it includes GFY elements, instalove, pack politics, danger, and some seriously exciting fight scenes.

I found Paul and Simon both really easy to like. Paul was just confused and wary and reluctant and stubborn and needy enough to make him believable and charming. Simon was just alpha and protective and smitten and proud and determined enough to make him believable and charming. The two of them together were HOT, funny, sweet, frustrating...and I found myself fully committed to their journey.

When the book started getting into the details of the pack, including growing factions, angry youth, challenges to authority, etc...I was less engaged. I mean, it was all really fascinating and Harper really WENT for it in these scenes. I just personally didn't want to go there with her. And that goes back to my starting point and my disinterest in shifters.

So, I think the book and the writing and the story were all really really really good. And if I have to read a shifter book for bingo, I'm super glad it was this one. I would HIGHLY recommend it to not only fans of shifters, but also those who don't mind them. But, since I'm just not into it, it didn't resonate or hit the high points for me personally. Still...enjoyed it...and by the way? I just realized there are additional books and shorts to the series...and I may even go on to read those!

Ingie says

4.3 stars for a well-written really good shifter story - another great read - Ms Harper is a writer to always trust

~ Please, ignore the bland cover! ~

Unacceptable Risk is one of the more down to earth, trustworthy PNR romances I read. This is not "fluff & sparkly cute", but about two realistic characters with their feet firmly on the ground. Both are struggling with feelings, the thought of being with another man (new for Paul), secrets about yourself (a wolf shifter in Simon's case) and not always so very understanding Pack members (an understatement).

~ Again, I'm **impressed** by a Kaje Harper novel. ~

Do you just want a soft and fuzzy read? Don't read this one because this is so much more. ...But, so very lovely and gripping romantic too.

~*~*~*~*~*~*~*~*~*

One evening when Paul is on his way home from his veterinary clinic, he sees a large bundle on the way. A pair of green eyes reflected in the headlights. There is a damaged very large wolf-like dog. Paul manages to get *Wolf*, which he names the dog, to get in the car and take him to the clinic to get some medical attention. After a few days flees Wolf and Paul makes inquiry pics to paste up around the neighborhood. Almost immediately arrives a green-eyed very handsome man to tell the vet that he, **Simon**, is the owner of the lost dog. Or what he is not saying to Paul, Simon is the wolf...

Simon makes no secret that **he is gay and starts pretty soon flirting** with the shy (so far straight) Paul. Slowly, slowly, with the help of sweet donuts, china food, bowling etc get Simon his new friend (and hopefully future lover..) to begin to let go and enjoy a bit of life when he is not the always hard working "Vet Paul".

"You kissed me."

"I did. I'm not going to apologize. You are extremely kissable."

"I wasn't...I didn't expect you to apologize. I just," Paul stared down into the mug. "I just wondering why."

"If I have to explain that to you, you're even less experienced than I think you are." Simon teased.

Paul's fair skin flushed red. "No, Jesus, I meant why me?"

I enjoyed this slightly innovatory wolf shifter story a lot. It's a nice, soft-hearted, but also to start with, quite anxiety-charged love story begins. There is much back and forth. Paul is anxious and indecisive. Which I actually think is good for it gave the story extra weight and feel of authenticity.

We also get a lot of Pack and werewolf politics. Simon must every day be sure to keep his back free from evil, so called, pack friends. Being gay is "**a shame**" and **very controversial**. So far, he is partially protected by the *Pack Alpha*, but it is on a thin brittle edge all the time. Unlike in many other werewolf's stories, only men can become shifters here. That fact doing it extra tricky with all the secrets.

The (light - this is mostly a love story..) "suspense part" was thrilling in the end. There are some guys to hate and fear (like the evil Karl..). Not unexpectedly becomes of course also Paul's life and safety threatened. - I got some really well-made surprises and everything wasn't to simply solved.

'Simon's eyes glowe with that odd green light as he kissed Paul firmly. "Sugar, when you've had sex with me, I'll be damned if you call it *nice*."

There is of course also **heat, lust and a slowly growing beautiful love story**. I must admit that it was a slow burning story but in the end, so good.

I am now a big fan of Kaje Harper's writing. Her books have something magical and different from many other M/M romances. They are more everyday (even in a paranormal romance) and gives, in each case me, a

sense of authenticity and good taste. Completely in my romantic taste every now and then. ~ I just want to read more of them.

I LIKE - very much - big applause for a well-made shifter story!

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*If I have to complain about one thing, it must be that boring gray book cover. Why has this amazing author's books so dreary and bland covers. It must, of course not, be some naked muscular guys, sexy or very sophisticated, but it may perhaps be a little more enticing.*

***...So don't worry about the cover. "Unacceptable Risk" is NOT a gray-beige colorless story. On the contrary!***

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## **Monika says**

I'm a fan of shifter/werewolf stories but haven't read one in a while! I loved this story!

Paul and Simon's relationship was perfect it moved along at just the right pace. No angst just a beautiful, romantic love story.

Simon was the perfect gentleman, no I see you, I want you, you're mine. He courted Paul which made this story different than other shifter/werewolf stories. He brought gifts (food) made him dinner (more food) and took on a date I can't remember if there was food. LOL

Paul, sweet, sweet Paul supposedly the weaker of the two but I thought he had great strength!  
It's nice to have a story where the main characters start as friends and end as lovers!

Well done Kaje! You are on my list of Auto buy authors and you never disappoint. Thank you!

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## **Tiya Rosa says**

### **2.5 stars**

It was supposed to be 1 star, but I've slept on it and calmed down and realized just because I got so pissed with one of the MCs and wanted him moved to a different book does not mean I should discount competent writing and pretty decent supporting characters.

Simon Conley is a gay werewolf whose lifestyle is frowned upon by his pack. He meets geeky veterinarian, Paul Hunter, when he was left to die by the side of the road after being beaten within an inch of his life by five of his packmates. They develop a friendship, Simon pulls an insta-love, and Paul shows how much of a fucking diva he is almost every chance he gets.

I hated Paul and that's a first in a Kaje Harper book for me because she always seemed to manage to make her MCs pretty likable even when they're being insensitive asses. I think it's mainly because despite their faults, those MCs invest in their HEAs and show some balls when needed. They also maintain the hero-hero dynamic that is my main attraction towards m-m romances. Paul is the exception.

He started out fine, what with helping Simon out when Simon was in wolf form and getting the shifter back on his feet, but the more we get to know him and see how he treats Simon, the more glaringly obvious it is that the two of them are not meant for each other.

It's like this. Simon is going insta-love on the vet whose sexual orientation up to that point had been hetero. The ex-hetero is understandably confused but is sexually attracted to the wolf so he kind of decided to explore it. I'm saying kind of because Paul was pulling some passive aggressive shit while Simon was being all I'm-gonna-pursue-you-and-be-a-doormat-despite-you-not-really-showing-more-interest-in-me-than-what-can-be-expected-from-a-baby-gay.

In fact, that's how the whole relationship pretty much goes. Simon pursues and apologizes and bends over backwards for Paul and Paul acts like your run of the mill confused heroine that we all just love to hate. You know the one who can't say what she really wants and acts all "I don't know" every time the hero asks her a straight question? The one who makes the hero do all the work in the relationship and just provides sexual relief? That's Paul, for ya. And if I wanted to read an incompetent heroine, I'd have just re-read *When He Was Wicked* or something.

Which is really my biggest beef with this book. When I pick up an m-m novel, I expect for both MCs to be men - not one of them to be a bratty, bitchy, unappreciative heroine (ala Eve Dallas) or an immature, irritating boy. I might get flack for this, but Paul honestly read like the most irritating of romance novel heroines. He waited to be pursued, left Simon hanging with his constant "I don't know"s when everyone can see how hard he comes with just a little frotting, and pretty much sat on his ass until he got saved.

If there is anything in this book that showed Paul lifting at least one finger to contribute to the relationship, I never saw it. Simon was the one who made sure he ate (again with the Roarke-Eve Dallas shit), Simon who adjusted depending on the vet's moods, Simon who was willing to face down his pack to save Paul. In exchange, Paul bitched when told by the pack leader that Simon needs to be fed to keep his strength, Paul kept Simon at arm's length even during times when the wolf was in need of at least one friendly shoulder to lean on, Paul let Simon guilt trip himself into thinking shit that happened was all his fault, and Paul made sure the diva-slave dynamic in their relationship remain up to the end of the fucking novel.

I guess Simon is to blame in a way as well - giving Paul a free pass in treating him like shit and all that.

This is still a decent Kaje Harper book despite my grumblings, though, if you can get over the fact that one of the MCs is an ungracious, complaining judgmental little bitch. The supporting characters are interesting and prove to be more of a pull compared to the MCs. The violence behind pack management is explained well and I kinda liked how the setting is described. Aaron is also a turn on, so there might be chance I'll read the next book in the series. As long as there's not much of Paul in it, I guess.

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**Heather K (dentist in my spare time) says**

**\*\*\*This is the MLR Press blind date with shifters book right now (1/9/16) for \$0.99!!!**

<http://www.mlrbooks.com/BlindDate.php>\*\*\*

### **5+ stars. Holy F balls, Kaje Harper just knocked it out of the park!**

Best shifter book that I have read this year and best M/M shifter book that I have ever read. Period. This book was amazing. Now, it isn't a flashy, insta-love, rapey kind of shifter book, if that is what you are into. It is a beautifully, perfectly crafted love story that manages to make werewolves seem realistic and not cheese-tastic.

Can we just take a moment and appreciate the awesomeness that is Kaje Harper? I mean, this woman can write anything! Throw a paranormal/a contemporary/a sci-fi at her and she handles it like a pro! (*hint, that is because she IS a pro*). I am so thoroughly impressed with her versatility.

I honestly have very few complaints. The sex was sweet and sexy (and gay-first-timers is my *favorite* theme), the romance was natural and believable, and the pack/shifter aspect was world-built to perfection. Some may complain about the slower pace, but I think it is that leisurely style that makes the build-up to the romance seem organic to me. And I thought that the pacing was spot on, for the record.

How happy am I that this was the book that I chose to get in paperback so Kaje Harper could sign it for me?! I hadn't even read it but I was gambling on it being amazing- that gamble paid off!

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### **♥Laddie♥ (Lee Lee) says**

#### **The Bloodlust & Mayhem Club Says 3 Stars**

Hello everyone, my name is Laddie, I'm a bloodlust-aholic and I call this meeting to order.

One of my main gripes with books lately has been the absence of grit.

Kaje Harper's *Unacceptable Risk* didn't vibe with me completely but one thing this story did do was give me a group of shifters whose actions had me rubbing my hands together with eeeevil glee.

The werewolf pack politics in this book were awesome. The pack infrastructure was rigid to say the least. These wolves fight to get where they are and they fight to keep their positions or move up in the ranks. Also, the way they handle a lot of things is to simply kill people off.

Gay werewolves? Get killed.

Werewolves who reveal the existence of werewolves? Get killed.

Humans who find out about werewolves? Get killed.

If you lose a challenge? You get killed.

And where do all of these dead bodies go? Oh, accidents are staged and bodies are burned in a secret incinerator. Vicious! This book was like a breath of fresh air where shifters are concerned. These wolves were not at all cuddly. I'd pick the mafia over these guys.

Those three stars are for the pack politics. Yes, I loved the shifters in this book that much.

Now, unfortunately, the other aspects of this book fell short for me. Simon is a gay werewolf who is alive only because he's taken an oath to never be alone with a shifter younger than he is. He's a quick witted and handsome guy who falls for Paul a lonely veterinarian. Simon and Paul were characters that I liked but I didn't love them. There was nothing that really endeared them to me. Because of that, it took me a long time to finish this book. I wasn't invested in Paul and Simon's romance.

I think that this book suffered a bit because it's the first in the series. A lot of effort went into making the werewolf pack come alive and this book was a total success in that regard. The romance kind of got left behind though. Now, knowing that, I'm definitely going to read the second book in the series. Hopefully it's about the pack alpha, Aaron. I think that now that the scene has been set, the romance in the second book will hopefully be as strong as the other aspects of the story.

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## Arthur says

Full five stars

Now, this is a kind of m/m romance that I love. Let me list the reasons.

1. The characters are males with penis. Not female with penis. Surely no damsel in distress. Even Paul, who physically is weaker, doesn't behave like he is dependent of Simon.
2. The romance is strong and sweet. Paul has doubts. Yet, he chooses to work on it. He may need time to think, but he doesn't stop the communication between them or being sulky all the time.
3. There is no unnecessary angst created by a reversed deus ex machina. Some authors sometimes run out of ideas on how to make their characters suffer, so out of nowhere they make the characters commit stupid action. Not here. No stupid misunderstanding to create plots.
4. No running around evolution. One of the main tenet of evolution is survival of the fittest. Sometimes, to do so, they have to kill. Just like characters in the pack. So often our 'modern' minds condemn *all* kind of violence, even when its needed to minimize the risk of bigger violence. That Paul is a vet perhaps helps. At

least it makes sense to him when Aaron explained to him the reason of the violence.

5. (view spoiler)

Thank you, Kaje!

Do I see a hint of Aaron being the next character?

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### **Lauraadriana says**

This is the story of Simon and Paul...One night Paul, a veterinarian, rescues a badly wounded wolf dog from the road. He takes him to his clinic and nurses him back, but the wolf dog escapes...A few days later Simon shows up at Paul's practice saying the dog was his and that he is safe now. So Paul need not worry about him anymore.

What Paul doesn't know is that Simon is a werewolf, in fact the wolf dog Paul had saved. Simon cannot reveal this secret to Paul. The pack's existence is guarded fiercely and involvement with humans is regarded as risky and dangerous.

But Simon can't help but look more and more for Paul. He likes him, Paul seems to like him back and they become quick friends and then much more.

This book had a lot of elements that were good. The world building was kept very simple, but the pack politics and dynamics were certainly very interesting. I was glad the author went into more detail about how that worked.

The characters were certainly likable, specially Simon, and Paul had his moments. However I never connected with them. There was something that was missing that just kept me from LOVING them.

I thought there were some sweet moments, but I have issues with insta-love, and I felt there was no time for me to believe in them IN LOVE...I dunno might just be me.

I think this is a first of a series. I would read the next one for sure, I rarely go by a first novel in a PNR series. They are always a bit disjointed. That was something I felt throughout, writing was not as tight as other books I've read by this author.

In any case, good effort at PNR and Weres, not my favorite of this kind of book. But very well above average and with cute romance and interesting pack intrigue to boot.

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## **Heller says**

4.5

Some stellar world-building here. I was impressed with the werewolf politics and how things played out, it was integral to the plot but it never overpowered the relationship building between Simon and Paul. I liked that things moved slowly and when circumstances force them into high gear that worked for me as well.

Lots of chemistry and surprisingly lots of humour, especially from Simon who uses his wit as a buffer to protect himself and others in the rigid werewolf hierarchy. This was a great book and one of the better werewolf stories I've read with a really coherent and developed story line with a strong romantic element.

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