



## Venom & Vanilla

*Shannon Mayer*

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Successful Seattle baker Alena Budrene doesn't want to die. But when she's infected with a lethal virus spread by supernatural beings, her only chance for recovery is to make a deal with the devil—or in this case, a warlock.

Though he saves her life, it looks nothing like the life she once knew—and neither does she. Alena is a new breed of “Supe” no one has ever seen before. Even the supernatural police don't know what she is. Now exiled to the northern side of the Wall, which marks the divide between humans and Supes, Alena is thrust into a dark and magical new world.

But just as she begins to adjust to all things supernatural, she realizes that her transformation is the least of her worries—and it was no accident. She was chosen...to be killed by a Greek hero trying to make a name for himself once more.

Alena was brought up to be subservient, preferring creating to fighting, and vanilla and honey to blood. But that was then. Now, to survive, she must stand up for herself—and this time she's got fangs. But will she be ready to use them?

## **Venom & Vanilla Details**

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Author : Shannon Mayer

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## From Reader Review Venom & Vanilla for online ebook

### Jeanny says

eARC kindly provided by publisher via NetGalley in exchange for an honest review.

DNF 31% I couldn't go on. It was an impossible task. I simply hated the h more more as the pages continued everything about her upset me.

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### Tink Magoo is bad at reviews says

Here's the thing - the story was decent, but the heroine was a complete and utter twat.

And here's another thing - swearing is okay, actually it's great. It can add passion to a dialogue and really make you feel the heightened emotions of a character.

What doesn't do either of those things is a character (an adult character) using words like frick, frack and butthole instead of swearwords. It wasn't endearing or cute, it was fucking stupid and so bloody annoying I wanted to punch someone. Really. I do not exaggerate here. It made the heroine come across as immature and like a complete twat. She's not 10 for fuck sake.

When you add that onto the fact that she's like a baggy beige cardigan, it wasn't good. It was actually shit and ruined what COULD have been a really good book. It's making me angry just thinking about it now. What a muppet. Argh.

Yes, yes I know I've been a negative Nancy again and still given this 2 stars, that's because it did show some promise under the silly sausage donkey nugget bum words. If the author can turn that ridiculousness into snark it could be a really good series. But that's a big if for me right now.

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### Mei says

What other disaster could happen to a poor innocent girl?

Oh, this was such a fun read!

Very unusual and mixing many genres! There're ancient Greek heroes, minotaurs, cupids, Greek gods, Satyrs, vampires, werewolves, witches... What more could you want? LOL

It follows the story of Alena, a successful owner of a pastry shop who caught a deadly virus and is preparing to die a horrible death.

And if that wasn't enough, her douchebag of a fiancee tells her that he will take her life insurance, sell her shop to her hated adversary and spend all her money to make a new life with a fake-bobs bombshell!

She already lost to the same virus her brother, her parents abandoned her for their religion... she doesn't have anybody left...

But, just when she decides to commit a suicide of a sort, she's given an opportunity to new life. New life as a Super - a changed human.

A witch, Merlin, changes her and save her life, but nobody knows what she's been changed into!

She also makes some rather incredible discoveries, such as that her beloved brother is alive and changed too into a naga - kind of a snake shape-shifter.

Suddenly, everybody wants a piece of her hide: vampires, werewolves, gods... They're all chasing her and she has to run!

Even if she's ill equipped to manage this strange world she's been plunged into, she makes some rather incredible choices. She saves lives, she helps different kind of supernaturals when even they don't mix together!

She's something extraordinary nobody has seen before: a mythical being!

Nothing is as it should be, everything is upsidedown!

I'll not tell you all the story, you should read it! But be aware that this is a parody of urban fantasy books! It is fun, but it is also eye-rolling inducing! You have to suspend belief to enjoy it - if you cannot do it, you'll find it cringe-worthy! :)

I liked it and laughed at all the eye-rolling stuff!

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### **Lara says**

This book is hard for me to review as it is a bit over-the-top and full of WTFery. This is a fantasy version of our world in which there are supernaturals who live openly. However, humans are uncomfortable with them and many are required to live in walled-off reservations when identified, despite having lived their entire lives with the rest of us. This is aggravated by the development of a plague of sorts that has no known cure.

The heroine is dying from that plague. She was raised in a very restrictive and conservative religious community, but fell in love and married outside her religion. Early in the book we realize her husband is pretty self-centered in a scene that had me stunned. At least the heroine was stunned too. However, she has a very self-effacing and naive attitude towards life, and is quick to blame herself when others are jerks.

As things develop and it turns out that there is a secret 'cure,' the situation gets even more strange. Her grandmother visits and hints at a family history. Alena finds herself changed and powerful. Her embracing of that power is uneven and haphazard, though I expect that her own history and the fast-developing circumstances warrant that. For much of the book she is in the dark about her family's history as well as her own nature. But, eventually she grabs on to her own strengths and uses them to save those she loves.

In the meantime, there is an unveiling of certain supernatural and godly figures. Some of that is really weird.

In addition, most of the men in the book are creeps at best, which was disappointing. However, several women are unpleasant as well, so at least it wasn't solely directed at one sex. The story takes place over a very short time period and a lot of craziness ensues. This is not a book to take seriously, but rather one to go along with for the rollercoaster ride.

While there is some back story given throughout the book, there are many questions left unanswered and it is clear that this is going to be a series that follows the heroine as she figures out what is going on, fights brand new enemies (that she has based on others' actions), and finds her strengths and a good relationship. So far there are a couple of attractive males, but I'm not convinced that either is worth serious consideration. That was a bit disappointing, but in urban fantasy series it usually takes a bit of time for the romance to develop.

I received a copy free for review through NetGalley.

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### **Mlpmom (Book Reviewer) says**

Not sure this was the book for me. I just had a hard time getting into it but it did have a fun and unique concept and design.

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### **Erin Dunn says**

<http://angelerin.blogspot.com/2016/10...>

Thank you to NetGalley for providing a free ebook copy of Venom & Vanilla By: Shannon Mayer in exchange for an honest review.

Short Review Summary:

Not for me at all.

Well Venom & Vanilla is not what I was expecting, and not in a good way. I made it maybe about 60-70% through before I had to give up on it. I couldn't take it seriously! Some of the things that happened are too silly to be believable. I don't care for that at all.

#UmNo

Also, I found some parts to be a bit weird and there isn't enough world building to really support the weirdness. There isn't enough depth, venom, or action in the story for me and it didn't help that I did not like the brainless MC Alena. Part of that may have been her overuse of the term "super duper," which annoyed me to no end. Or perhaps it's how thanks to her supernatural change she's so beautiful now and has longer legs...blah blah. I'm really over supernatural changes making female characters go from plain to gorgeous, especially when it's done in a cheesy way. I have to admit that I'm pretty disappointed since I was looking forward to this one so much, but it just didn't do it for me.

#NotSuperDuper

I can't personally recommend Venom & Vanilla, but if you like your urban fantasy books very vanilla then no harm in trying it!

#FantasyLight

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### ? percy says

this could have been really interesting, and i actually found the heroine quite amusing and quirky (she reminded me of alison hendrix from orphan black) but oh my actual gosh all of the tropes made me want to poke my eyes out. humans that turn beautiful when they become supernaturals, heroine who is magically super powerful and needs little-to-no-training, mcfucking i n s t a l o v e and your obligatory Blonde Barbie "Bitch" With Fake Boobs who is literally called Barbie. i mean really. REALLY??!?

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### clara says

Thanks, amazon, for recommending me with kindle first the most laughably terrible book that I've read in years. I almost rated this two stars for the enjoyment of making all my friends suffer by posting screenshots in the group chat. If this book is a parody, I'm impressed at the author's masterful touch in creating such a terrible, terrible book. In this book, the main character frequently uses the words 'fricky dicky' to swear and refers to supernatural creatures as 'super duper.' She was raised in a fundamentalist Christian home and married the first guy she saw shirtless. She's a snake lady with sparkly blood. Don't forget though, she's like, super sexy. She has big bazookas. This is a term that is used in the actual real book.

Here are some quotes from the people I dragged through this hell with me.

"Just burn me alive." -Lynette, age 21

"This book made me never want to look at words again." -Nikki, age 20

"That's it, kids. We did it. We found this generation's My Immortal." -Adelaide, age 19

"It's called Venom and Vanilla because you want to poison yourself once you've read it." -Paria, age 20

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### Montzalee Wittmann says

Venom & Vanilla (The Venom Trilogy #1) by Shannon Mayer is a fantasy audible book I fell in love with! Our gal is dying from a plague that is sweeping the country. There is a wall built keeping the supernaturals on one side and the normal people on the other. Only those with a touch of supernatural blood can get sick or if they are exposed to the the sick person. Our gal is dying and ca her friend tells her she knows a wizard can make her into a supernatural if she has the money. She has the money but does she want to? She was raised that supernaturals were wrong. She had the option of vampire, werewolf, or witch. She declines but the warlock comes back and asks again and she agrees but tells him to make her none of those things but something special. Oh boy, does he! You have to read this book! He makes her into a mythological creature! Part siren, part snake. She can shift to a 20 foot snake with the power of a siren. Her body is now different too and super hot. This book is a hoot! I loved every bit! There is so many fun characters, great plot, and humorous moments. This is an audible and the narrator had their hands(voice) full with this challenge and did it perfect!

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## **Carmel (Rabid Reads) says**

### **Reviewed by: Rabid Reads.**

In an attempt to not judge this book by the same standard as Shannon Mayer's other titles, I constantly readjusted my mindset while reading VENOM AND VANILLA. The tone was very light, I'd describe it as an Urban Fantasy parody, and the protagonist is a Firstamentalist (think religious zealot meets goody-goody). But, try as I may, the insta-heroine, mythology leaps, and shaky pacing just didn't work for me.

I enjoyed the premise, and the basis of the VENOM TRILOGY was sound. Alena is forced to adjust to an inconceivable situation when she's diagnosed with the Aegrus virus. There is no cure, and it kills within weeks unless the infected is willing to give-up life as they know it, and become a monster. For Budrene that's a huge ask because it goes against her morals, upbringing, and the very fiber of her being.

Here's where things start to get wonky. Lena owns her new identity without barely batting an eye. She now has the body of a sex goddess, and has basically condemned her soul to Hell by turning her back on her beliefs. So, she evolves from a little brown church mouse to a lethal succubus overnight with next to no fuss, and yet she can't bring herself to swear. Her character was rife with inconsistencies, and contradictions.

Ok, so now that we've established that I'm not keen on just-add-water-champions the remaining reasons on why I didn't like this novel should be fairly apparent. Lena defeats Achilles with minimal bluster (or effort), makes Greek mythology her bitch, and amasses an outrageous number of allies in the war of heroes vs. monsters for someone who's essentially the equivalent of a one-day-old baby in the world of Super Duper.

VENOM AND VANILLA was a hot mess. ~2.5 Stars

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## **Obsidian says**

### **I did not finish this and stopped at 24 percent.**

I received this book for free for November's Kindle single or whatever it's called on Amazon. I just really wish I had passed on this book. The world building was non-existent and we were just thrown facts our way. And I am sorry, reading about how after a change was done to Alena and how sexy she was and how people were staring at her and or wanting to have sex with her was too much.

The book starts off with Alena in a hospital dying of something called Aegrus virus. Apparently this virus comes from humans/inhumans (Alena calls them super dups) or who are immune to this virus. Alena is in a hospital being visited by her husband (who up until then was a really good guy) who pretty much later baby's her butt and leaves her alone to die. But then Alena's roommate tells her about a secret cure and though Alena says no to the cure, ends up taking it anyway when she realizes she doesn't really want to die.

We find out who is behind Alena getting this cure (yeah I called that whole thing) and then the book has Alena being chased because her kind is not supposed to interact with other super dups (her words for the supernatural people). At that point I just stopped because this book was lowering my IQ the more I kept reading it.

I still don't understand how the United States managed to build a freaking wall tall and long enough to separate out human/supers. I still don't get how other countries apparently were dealing with this. Alena's family's backstory (religious types) did not really fit and I just gave up trying to make two plus two equal four. The plot was all over and the world building was a mess.

The development of characters was pretty terrible too. We hear bits and pieces about Alena's brother and that doesn't match up with the guy when we catch up with him later in the book. Same goes for Alena's husband. He sounds like a really good person who actually stands up to her mother and family due to Alena's strict religious background, but then he morphs into an asshole over night. It doesn't work. I think the author was fixated more on the end product (the completed book and making it into a trilogy) then actually making sure readers could follow what was happening.

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### **Denisa says**

3.5- 4ish. Great start!

It's a pretty good start to a new series.

I really seem to like Alena, although she doesn't really seem to have depth so far. Still, she's pretty sweet and funny and a bit of a badass, so let's see what happens next.

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### **Terri ♥ (aka Mrs. Christian Grey) says**

A decent book. Interesting world building. The heroine is a early version of Anita Blake, a little self righteous, but not as annoying about it.

I hate injustice. So the inequality bugs me to no end; probably enough that I lost a little enjoyment. Here is hoping that the inequality doesn't last until the final pages of the trilogy.

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### **Hannah says**

I'm rating this book 3.75 stars. When i first started reading this book I had a difficult time with Alena. It really irritated me the way she believed. That all supernaturals were evil and she had very occult like beliefs. Fortunately, this book got a lot better and better as i read on. Alena slowly became un-victim like and shed some of those opinions about supernaturals and everything else. I really got into this book even though it took a while. It was original and i didn't even mind the snake shifter thing. Even though i hate snakes. Overall this book had most of everything you need in a paranormal/fantasy read. Action, Adventure, a little bit of Humor and surprises. Although this book did need more romance, it barely had any. I think that this series will have more romance in the next book. Alena was a character that you either love or hate. I ended up liking her. I really liked and enjoyed the others characters in this book, including but not limited to the vampire mob boss and the Greek bird monster girls. The Greek mythology element in this book was a twist and definitely had a spin on it, that i have never read before. It was interesting how the Greek heroes weren't exactly good. The writing and pace of this book was perfectly done. Overall this book had many positives and some negatives. It does need a little help here and there. But i really enjoyed reading this and the author

did had good descriptions that brought the book to life in my mind.

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### **Lillian ? Cloud 9 Books ? says**

\*\*\*\*\* 4 Stars \*\*\*\*\*

**Venom & Vanilla** is one crazy ride. There's vampires, sirens, werewolves, and mystical gods. If you can think of anything supernatural, they exist in this world.

The story is told in Alena's point of view. A young woman that constantly follows rules... until she gets a deadly disease and later gets left alone to die in a hospital.

As she prepares for her final days, she gets a chance to live one more time. But she has to turn into something unnatural.

The setting is similar to X-Men. Normal humans don't like unfamiliar people, so everyone is segregated. Supernaturals have no rights and are assigned to live in designated areas.

As Alena navigates the new world, she makes new friends and enemies.

The pace is very fast, and there's never a dull moment. I enjoyed the humor, action, and light romance, and I can't wait to read book 2!

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