



All That Bleeds

Kimberly Frost

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*Within the elite community of the Etherlin,
the descendants of the ancient muses are inspiration made flesh. But beyond the wall protecting their world
wait the fallen, those who yearn to possess them...*

As the last heiress of the House of North, Alissa has never been one to follow laws blindly. Striking up a secret friendship with a half-vampire enforcer is dangerous, but Merrick is a temptation she can't resist.

Merrick's desire for Alissa consumes him, though he knows better than to pursue a muse. But when Alissa is kidnapped and brought outside the Etherlin walls, Merrick will do anything to protect the woman who tempts him with her very existence.

As enemies from both worlds threaten, Alissa realises that Merrick is the only one she can trust - even while the pull she feels toward him is the thing she fears most...

All That Bleeds Details

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Author : Kimberly Frost

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From Reader Review All That Bleeds for online ebook

Melindeeloo says

I really liked All That Bleeds, Kimberly Fox's first novel in her new Etherlin series and even though All that Bleeds is a much better story, I think my enjoyment was enhanced by having read the prequel short First Light in the Tied with a Bow anthology. Because even though Frost's Etherlin world is interesting and populated with Muses, the gangster-like Ventala (half human progeny of vampires), and fallen angels, the world is not fully explained here, so it helped to have a bit of the world building coming in. Having read the short, I also had a heads up on the leading pair Muse Alissa and one time ventala enforcer Merrick there was just a glimpse of their forbidden romance - but I thought that even that peek was stole the spotlight from the leading pair in short, and I was so ready for their story here.

One of the things that I really enjoyed about All That Bleeds is how that relationship – a friendship that should never have been nurtured - grew from afar through gifts and letters. As much as I like soul mates, building on a connection that grew over time was a nice change of pace to all of those instantaneous mate bonds which are all too often used as a quick and dirty device to pull PNR couples together. And being exceedingly hero-centric I thought that Merrick was a great romantic lead – an understated but lethally dangerous intelligent bad boy with a heart. Also, even though the background plot ties up pretty quickly at the end, I did like the touch of the suspense which served to bring the pair together and keep them together with the heroine in peril long enough to cement their relationship.

Probably the one thing I found odd about the book was the Muses themselves, while the idea of special race with the ability to magically stoke the creative energy in the humans they sponsor was very original, they ended up feeling sort of like psychic cheerleaders who magically inspire their groupies to greatness. I don't know that Muses on the whole entirely work for me yet.

Even still, I did enjoy the All That Bleeds, and the setup for the next starring pair – a Muse and a fallen angel – will have me checking out the next book.

Paradoxical says

All that Bleeds takes an old concept (forbidden, star crossed love) and packages it in a glittering world filled with muses and half vampires. It's not exactly trying to tread a new path, but it's not too terrible either. It was, at most, average.

Alissa is a strong character, and she knows it (which is very different from other heroines). It might be a little annoying how perfect she is, and how beautiful and glamorous her life is, but it's balanced somewhat by the instability of her father, and the fact that she's not an idiot. She actually has a solid head on her shoulders and for most of the book I was rather glad to have her as the main character. On the other hand, Merrick, her love interest, is rather flat in comparison. Or maybe he seems rather flat because his entire life seems to revolve around being absolutely in love with Alissa. You know obsessive overwhelming love? That would be Merrick in a nutshell.

At first it was rather refreshing for a male lead to be so open in his love for the MC, but after a while it just

wears down on the reader (or at least it did for me). The fact that he seems to have based his life around Alissa was disturbing. That he was so desperate while she was more goal oriented was a nice role reversal to see, but not to this extent.

The plot held my attention, but it dragged down in several parts as I got nearer towards the end (which is precisely the last place where you want the plot to drag). I'm not sure if it's partially because I grew tired of Alissa and Merrick's relationship, or if it's really because the plot jerked along slowly.

It also doesn't help that I'm not fond of really random POV switches. Alissa to Merrick I could see. But just a few scenes in the POV of a fellow muse? Or of the enemy? It felt more forced than anything, like the author wanted to include some information, but couldn't figure out any other way other than doing it like this. I also dislike really blatant lead ins to the next book when it doesn't really have anything to do with the current plot at hand.

Basically, the best part of the book is Alissa's strength. Not physical strength because she pretty much has none of that, but her mental fortitude was nice to see, and somewhat rare in a heroine. The rest was shaky. 2-3 stars, rounding down to 2.

Jessica at Book Sake says

Alissa is the good girl, Merrick plays the bad boy, and they both do it oh so well. The story opens in the height of action and continues with a quick pace throughout the book. Even in the downtime scenes, the getting to know our characters bit, it still flows quickly and fluidly, never a dull moment. Learning about both Alissa's past and Merrick's was interesting and often downright entertaining. (Merrick's definitely the winner for the crazy friend story.) Alissa's character is endearing and I felt for her and the facade she had to put on every day in order to play her role appropriately and care for her father. Merrick, while harsh in some of the things he does, never made me hate him for what he did, not once. If anything he's someone you swoon over without thinking twice.

The plot had twists and turns and navigation's I didn't expect. While the romance was expected (and wanted!) by reading the summary, it was still tense and moving. Who doesn't want someone that only has eyes for them and would move heaven and earth to get to them? When I finished this book I realized I'd love to read more about where the characters go, and whoohoo – that's why there are more books to come. I will definitely be picking up the next book in The Etherlin series.

ARC Reviewed by Jessica for Book Sake.

Darcy says

I think what makes this book so interesting is the world that the book is set in. It is like nothing else out there. The story itself is as old as any, a classic Romeo and Juliet theme.

I love that these 2 meet, but had to stay away from each other, yet still communicated through letters and gifts. It allowed them an intimacy but with an arms length and later became a point of flirting by mentioning the letters.

I like the whole concept of muses and how they use their inherent magic to inspire others. I didn't like how they council basically forced the muses to have to compete with each other causing a tensions and a caustic attitude between them.

I look forward to reading more in this series.

Marsha says

(3.5 Stars)

When I read the summary for "All That Bleeds" I was not sure what to expect. However, I was pleasantly surprised with the story line and characters.

Alissa North is a descendant of Muse. She inspires humans who have gone on to win Academy Awards and other worldly prizes. She takes very little for herself; but she is desperate to win the Muse Wreath. Generations of women in her family have held the award but she wants it for a different reason: she wants to prolong the life of her ailing father.

When Alissa was twenty she was held in a safe room while a demon attacked humans at a ball. Then along comes the assassin, Merrick (part vampire and part human) who kills the demon. They met and she has illegally been corresponding with him for the past five years. Then she is kidnapped by other half vamps for nefarious purposes. Once again, Merrick comes to her aid and he refuses to allow anything to happen to her. Unfortunately for him the people he worked for have placed him on their hit list because he refuses to do any more work for them. Will he be able to keep Alissa safe and avoid the death sentence being imposed upon him by his former allies? That will be answered once you pick up this book.

If I enjoyed this book, why did I only give it 3.5 stars? Well, I felt the world building was not very good. I had difficulty getting a handle on where the plot took place. The writing made me feel as though this was ancient times or in and strange land yet, the author makes it clear from the dates written that it is modern day. She also mentions Colorado and California. I just felt a void as to where the story took place and what the area looked like.

I did enjoy the characters, especially Merrick. He was relentless in his quest to keep Alissa safe. I wished Alissa's character was a little stronger at times and not so malleable.

Under the Covers Book Blog says

When I first read about the Etherlin world in the Tied With a Bow anthology just a months back I have to admit I was intrigued. The storyline and the world itself were captivating and even though it was a bit hard to take it all in by reading a novella (that might've been too ambitious) it did set the stage for this book. Even though I don't think you need to read the prequel in that anthology, it would give you a bit of background history so you go into this one knowing a bit more about the world.

Basically the world is divided, physically, by a wall. There's the Etherlin, where the muses live; and the Varden where vampires and lowlifes make their home. Well, you will know vampires as ventalas and they are seen as second class citizens due to a plague that happened in the 1950s.

In All That Bleeds we feature one of the worlds Top Muses, Alissa, from the House of North, is in competition to be the Wreath Muse. She is a bit of a celebrity in her world, complete with paparazzi's and bodyguards. Her job is to inspire humans to create and invent great things. At the same time she cares for her father, who has gone a bit mad after her mother "killed herself".

She's not supposed to associate with ventalas (vampires) but there's one halfling that caught her interest and she's been secretly corresponding with him for five years. Five years that she's had the safety of a wall separating them so that she can be herself in her letters.

Now that somehow she's in danger, just a few votes before the final vote for the Wreath Muse, she could only count on him to keep her safe.

Why this book worked for me? The originality of the story. Yes, it's refreshing to read about a different setting and group of supernaturals!! The slow building of the relationship between Alissa and Merrick. There's so much that's keeping them apart and they still, slowly, manage to become the most important part of the other person's life. There's a good amount of suspense to keep things interesting. And then, lets face it... a good heaping dose of exquisite bad boys. Merrick, with his expensive Armani suits, is wicked (yeah wickedly hot) but melts in her hands. He respects her, her boundaries, and her role, but all he wants is to be where she is. She seems to be so proper but she's truly adventurous and a bit rebellious, even though with a sense of responsibility. Merrick and Alissa were captivating.

And lets not forget the side characters! Alissa's father, in all his craziness was awesome. And don't get me started about Lysander. I loved him in the prequel and I loved him the little bit he was in this book and I cannot wait for his book next. There's just something about a scarred, don't-care-attitude, leather-wearing fallen angel that can melt anyone. I'm already liking his pairing with Cerise (I'm guessing) and I can tell there will be lots of sparks between them too. The gloves will come off!

Favorite Quotes:

"Since you and I go way back, I'll confess my identity. I'm the sits-on-high, betrayed-by-my-favorite-angels creator of heaven and earth." Merrick stared coolly at Victor. "You can call me God for short."

"Real and earthbound," he confirmed. "You don't look it."

"No?"

"No." His stare consumed her. "In that dress, you're heaven's mist. I can't decide whether to fall to my knees and worship from the ground up, or to start at your tendrils and work my way down."

*ARC provided by publisher

Reviewed by Francesca

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Amanda says

So I got this book from a friend who recommended it. I loved it. It was written very well. I felt that it was

easy to be drawn in.

I have to say I was pleasantly pleased on the outcome of the forbidden relationship. It had its moment in the middle where it was a tad boring. But it didn't last long and got better fast. I was a fan of Alissa and Merrick. Richard was also a great character. I did for sometime think that Dimitri was Alissa real dad the way he doted on her. Luckily the truth of it all came out and I felt compelled to like his eldest daughter. The younger one, I despise. I felt that she was not a good muse and jealousy was clouding her. I wont say she isn't going to be a good person but I wanted to slap her everytime I saw her name.

I cant help but love the book. Thanks Helena for recommending it. I hope to find the next books and keep going with the series.

Mina Khan says

3.5 Stars

I loved Merrick, the hero. He's just the right mix of danger and sweet and sexy. Love the way he courts the heroine Alissa. Loved the trope of forbidden romance and the way their relationship was built.

However, I would have liked to have seen more of what it meant to be a muse, and seen how they are making a difference in the world. We are given an idea, but I wanted it to be a stronger part of the story.

So yes, I do recommend it as a nice read. And yes, I will pick up the next in the series and also try to hunt down the short story, First Light. Ms. Frost writes wonderful characters!

Bookaholics says

All That Bleeds by Kimberly Frost
Paranormal Romance Jan 3rd, 2012
4 ½ stars

All That Bleeds is a new paranormal series by Kimberly Frost. It is a bit of a departure from the more lighthearted books in her Southern Witch series. That is because it is more serious and complex. However, it still retains the author's delightfully entertaining writing style that charms you with her sympathetic characters. This series centers on females Muses who work to inspire others for the greater good of mankind. All the Muses are competing to be the lead Muse and win the Wreath which helps focus their powers.

In this story, Alissa North is a Muse and the last of her line. After her mother's suspicious suicide, her father lost her mother's muse power and fell into madness. As she struggles to help her father and win the Wreath which she hopes to help her father and discover the real reason behind her mother's mysterious death, she finds herself kidnapped! Luckily the dangerous and lethally handsome vampire enforcer Merrick (who she has secretly been communicating with) is enamored with her and secretly keeps watch over her. As a result, he saves her. Both are strongly attracted to each other but their relationship is forbidden if Alissa wants to win the Wreath. Torn by her need for justice and her growing affection for a man who will stop at nothing to protect her, Alissa must discover what is most important.

This is a fabulous new series that drew me in from the first page. I can't wait for the next book which features Alissa's muse friend Cerise who I suspect will have a very interesting romance with a fallen angel! What attracted me to this first book is how well defined and immersing the world the author has created. Muses are highly regarded and it was fascinating to read all the politics, betrayals and backstabbing that occur behind the pretty façade that they show to the 'normal' public. I also liked the dangerous edge brought from the mystery behind the person/s who wish to discredit Alissa and bring her downfall. Plus the true reasons behind the death of Alissa's mother are very unexpected if anticlimactic. The growing love between Alissa and Merrick was very powerful to read as both characters are misunderstood but together find understanding and comfort with each other that they could not find with anyone else. Their forbidden love was suspenseful to read as I wanted them to overcome their obstacles and find happiness together.

Engaging characters, a star-crossed love and a lethally handsome hero make for spectacular reading.

Reviewed by Steph from Bookaholics Book Club

Holdsherbreath says

Okay world, I asked for a sign and you gave me one

This book was okay, which sadly enough is exactly what I needed from the pnr world. It's in-between time right now, all my favorite authors have either just released their new books or I am waiting on the new one and so I just needed something to tide me over, that's all I ask for, a fluffy funny read that doesn't need to be profound, just good enough for me to get through and have a few sighs along the way, however that doesn't mean that I will give this book a four, 'cuz believe me, if I had not just come out of the biggest Can-I-Please-Get-A-Good-Book slump, I probably wouldn't have liked this book nearly as much as I did.

So let's get to it:

The Story

Alissa North is a muse, she inspires people to do good things. She's good at her job, and is in the top running for the Wreath, which is some competition/good job badge/power tool that the best Muse would get. The only thing she has going against her is her crazy father and her kinda-but not really friend Merrick, who is a half vampire and forbidden to interact with muses. There is a kidnapping, a death, and the mystery: *What did happen to Alissa's mother those final three days of her life?* Obviously there is a romance, and you know from the blurb that the romance is with Merrick.

The good

There is one thing that I can say confidently about this book, the romance is well done, not many corny cliches and no insta-love, there were real life decisions and real life consequences and a whole lota regret, gotta love me some regret. There's this one part in the book that I think sums up the whole of Merrick and Alissa's relationship. So someone asks Merrick why he decided to move to a certain area in his neighborhood and become a person with power without actually using said power, and Merrick thinks to himself that if he hadn't then Alissa wouldn't have had anywhere to send her letters to.

Um hello, can I just say

swoon

There is just something about him saying that, him admitting from the beginning of the story that he would do anything, be anything for this girl, who cannot give him all of herself that just fill my heart up to capacity leaving me a puddle mess

The Bad

This story was so complacently average, unique enough to be different and grab attention, but then nothing was done with said attention. I left the story with no idea what a muse actually did and how it was done. There was no world building at all, and when it came down to it, this was a contemporary romance with a few paranormal undertones, take out the "fantasy" parts and you just have a story about a boy and a girl falling in love, which I know is how every paranormal story should be, however I feel that in a really good PNR if you take out the fantasy you have no story, you take away a vital element that makes the story other and new, not this. This would be fine without Muses or vampires.

And so in conclusion I say, sure, read All That Bleeds, you'll probably like it, however don't push people over for it, matter of fact, I would just wait for the library to get it, or for the price to go down. It's okay, absolutely and completely average. But hey,

Joy (joyous reads) says

Five years ago, Merrick saved Alissa's life and those of her kind from a demon on a killing rampage. Their connection was instantaneous. Ever since then, Alissa developed a respect for him regardless of what he was - a powerful enforcer whose main goal is to rid the world of demons and wayward vampires. Theirs was a clandestine relationship that could ruin her chances of bearing the Wreathe if exposed. Alissa wouldn't care so much for the crown had it not been for her father who seemed to have lost his mental capacities since her mother was found hanging from the rafters. She's resolved that the Wreathe could help restore her father from his old self. But this means that there could be no relationship between her and Merrick. Easier said than done...especially when Alissa found herself kidnapped and being snacked on by another vampire. A muse's blood is not only delectable but could sustain a vampire longer than normal. Merrick would do anything to protect her even to glamor himself with magic and place himself in a position where his life would always be at stake. As the vote for the Wreathe gets closer, Alissa's restless need to know the circumstances of her mother's apparent suicide puts her own life in peril and pushes her closer to Merrick.

I didn't expect to enjoy this book as much as I did simply because Paranormal Romance is a genre that I have a hard time getting into. As much as I love J.R. Ward and Sherrilyn Kenyon, I'm happy that their series are sometimes a year apart between publications. And in any case, I could've sworn All That Bleeds was a Paranormal YA, and of course, I was wrong. It didn't matter anyway because once I started reading this, it was difficult to stop. The plot has an unputdownable quality in spite of the grievances I will state below.

While I loved the premise of this paranormal fare, I couldn't say the same for the characters. I just don't think that there was enough development done on Alissa and Merrick. Alissa was a bit perplexing. Her character was that of a perfect creation; beautiful, compassionate and thoroughly devoted to her father and to her role as a...well, a muse. But I found her to be lacking in grit - chutzpah, something that I'm not overly fond of in my heroines. She can be pretty determined and at times, even conniving when it comes to the welfares of both Merrick and her father but I just wish that she was consistent. I cannot stand that Dimitri and Grant

were pulling the wool over her head and she seem oblivious about it all. But I also understand that no character ever written is perfect so a flaw here and there is acceptable.

As for Merrick, let's just say that aside from the fangs and the incredible strength he possess, the man wasn't much of a typical vampire. He doesn't burn in the sun, he just...uhm...fall into a heavy sleep. I don't ever remember him craving blood or did he ever hold his breath because Alissa smelled too appetizing. All in all, his skills were a bit on the interchangeable side and really not that convincing as a vampire. Come to think of it, I don't ever remember him drinking blood...or did I miss that somehow?

I do love the other characters in this book, however. I'm looking forward to reading more about Cerise and Lysander (the fallen angel). They had a brief encounter in this book that scored uhm...7 out of 10 on the heat scale. Their story is next so I'm plenty pumped :) Incidentally, I just saw the cover and wowza. That is all.

This is a promising paranormal series which combines all the elements characteristic of the genre. Action, folklores with a twist, legends and some pretty hot and heavy love scenes. If all the aforementioned awesomeness is your cup of tea, then you might want to get a copy. As for me, this book was not entirely disappointing, it just didn't exactly hit the spot, ya know? But I'm on the lookout for Lysander's story, that's for sure!

Carolyn F. says

After an initial traumatic meeting, Alissa and Merrick kept up a correspondence for five years. I love stories with this element although we only get a glimpse of the letters. Merrick has loved Alissa but Alissa isn't sure what she feels for Merrick. I loved that as she realizes things there's no subterfuge or double speak. There were two people I thought could have been the bad guy, then a third was thrown in. The reasons why made me go, "Duh!" I should have guessed.

Great book.

MelissaB says

Okay story but the paranormal world building wasn't very good and the story wasn't great. The muse theme seemed kind of hokey, basically the heroine is a muse who uses magic to "inspire" people to do stuff and is in some popularity contest to win a top muse award. I would have liked it better if the heroine had a better super power.

I liked the hero, he was half-vampire. The problem was I didn't know enough about the world to understand how the whole vampire thing worked. The background is never really explained. The hero lost some points by constantly doing exactly what the heroine wants because he was so infatuated with her.

So it was an okay read for me, it wasn't as good as I wanted it to be.

Douglas Meeks says

All That Bleeds by Kimberly Frost

My rating: 4 of 5 stars

I finished All That Bleeds (A Novel of the Etherlin) today and it was an astoundingly good novel. The main characters were fleshed out pretty well although she left the secondary characters a bit more 2 dimensional. The story was great but the basic theme of "bad boy falls in love with princess" type plot was done well. It has vampires and muses (with the ability to enhance people to more creativity and perhaps to command them a bit like hypnotic trance). Merrick was a wonderfully developed and complex character who answers to none and the muse Alissa made a complex couple and an engrossing romance while under the threat/mystery of who is trying to kill/kidnap her. All in all enough action for the UF fans and enough romance for the PNR types, one of the better mixtures, I have to give it a solid 4 stars maybe a bit more, did I mention he has a Fallen Angel for his best friend, nice touch there, I think we will see more of him. I will be buying the sequel.

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ILoveBooks says

What happens when two people who are never supposed to meet are instantly attracted to each other? Alissa is a muse and Merrick is part vampire; by all accounts, the two should not be attracted to each other. What do you do when you're not supposed to see the other person? Find ways around it, of course! Alissa begins writing Merrick secret letters while he sends her thoughtful gifts and they continue with their secret correspondence. This idyllic world can't last forever. Alissa is kidnapped and thrown into Merrick's world, forcing them to make decisions about their illicit relationship and their futures.

As a character, Alissa is brave, intelligent, compassionate, and unique. The reader will take an instant liking to her. Merrick is handsome, charismatic, and mature. Merrick and Alissa complement each other perfectly. The reader will believe in their relationship, Merrick will go to great lengths to keep Alissa safe and Alissa risks her current lifestyle to continue a relationship with him. The secondary character vary from amusing to captivating to evil, the reader will find a good variety in this book.

The plot was very different. The reader is introduced to the Etherlin and the world of the Muses. The Muses

live in a bit of a bubble though, what happens when one wanders beyond the wall? The reader will enjoy Frost's smooth style of writing, the dialogue between the characters is snappy and will keep the readers' attention. This book is highly recommended to young adult/teen readers.
