



## Coyote's Creed

*Vaughn R. Demont*

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**Coyote's Creed** Vaughn R. Demont

*Always have an ace up your sleeve.*

*Broken Mirrors, Book 1*

If con games were taught in high school, Spencer Crain would be on the honor roll. As it is, he'll be riding the edge of failure to graduation next month. Then Spence gets the news that his long-gone father is not only dead, but was a Coyote, one of three clans of tricksters in the City.

With a near-catatonic mother on his hands, Spence couldn't care less about the Coyotes' ongoing feud with the Phouka and the Kitsune—until it lands on his doorstep. Suddenly he's thrown headfirst into a dangerous world he knows next-to-nothing about. His only guide is Rourke, dashing King of the Phouka, plus a growing pack of half-siblings, a god, and Fate herself.

As Spence embarks on a journey to learn the Coyote's creed, the truth about his heritage, and how to handle his growing attraction to Rourke, he wonders when his life turned from TV sitcom to real-life danger zone. And what price must he pay to survive the next roll of the dice...

**Warning:** *Contains PG-13 rated violence, R-rated language and X-rated hotel scenes. Meta-humor, pop-culture humor, utter disregard for the 4th wall abound.*

## Coyote's Creed Details

Date : Published October 11th 2011 by Samhain Publishing, Ltd.

ISBN :

Author : Vaughn R. Demont

Format : Kindle Edition 273 pages

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

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# From Reader Review Coyote's Creed for online ebook

## Kaje Harper says

This is a really entertaining urban fantasy with a gay MC, and the beginnings of an interesting relationship. Spencer is eighteen, and taking care of himself and to some degree his mother. She fades in and out of normal life, sometimes withdrawing and unable to do more than get through eating and sleeping. He's been earning extra money by petty cons, card tricks and other ruses, and keeping their home life going while flunking school. But he suddenly is awoken to his true half-human nature, and to the wide-ranging and dangerous paranormal world around him.

I really liked Spencer's narrative voice, and I believed his youthful errors, his distractions (sometimes magical, sometimes sexual, sometimes just... Spencer) and the way he dealt with his changing life. At times the action and magic system didn't quite track for me. That may be a fault of my less than careful reading, rather than the story itself, but there is a degree of complexity that probably makes this a better read if you don't start it at midnight.

The secondary characters are very entertaining and interesting. The pantheon of creatures deviates from the standard weres-and-vampires, although those are named as also existing. The role of gods, of various levels of omniscience and power, adds interest although occasionally feels arbitrary.

Spencer's sexual relationship is with an old friend whom he had regarded as something of an uncle, but when the age gap consists of centuries, maybe millennia, then it ceases to concern me. Rourke is a Phouka, nearly immortal, and although there is also a real power imbalance (since he turns out to be royalty) his take on their relationship wasn't overly dominating. I really would have loved more of them together. I did *love* that Spencer didn't immediately declare undying love (well, at least, he didn't mean it.) At eighteen and with all the changes, it wouldn't have rung true. (I was disappointed though, to have the next book, which I immediately started, open two years later with a different MC.)

Worth reading, if you like urban fantasy, but don't go in looking for a true romance.

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## Ami says

### DNF at 56%

I was able to push myself until half-way through the book when I realized, heck, I didn't bloody care about these characters or storyline, so why should I continue? I think I have read enough urban fantasy / paranormal series to know what works for me and what doesn't. This one falls into the latter.

The whole world built and the idea of the Coyotes, Dogs, Foxes, and the Feud didn't grab me. I thought it was rather confusing and I found my eyes glazing over through the explanations and the 'tales' that Roarke was telling. I also thought that there were too many detours in order to get the quest -- of Spencer getting the urn.

I couldn't connect to the characters nor the writing -- maybe it is excellent for others but to me, it's just not as sharp and clear as I prefer it to be. Plus, I couldn't care less about an 18-year-old who seemed to just get so

horny ever since he 'opened up' about his true self.

Oh, and the whole age gap with the 'uncle' thing? At first I wasn't bothered with it, because it is the kind of context in a urban fantasy/paranormal series that is acceptable (since Roarke is quite *old*) but then I found out about Roarke (view spoiler) and that was just too icky for me.

So first DNF book of 2015. Sorry, Didi! As always, any DNF book will not be rated.

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## Elizabetta says

### 2.5 stars

Initially, this feels like a waking dream. Spencer, a teen-aged con in the making, has just learned his dead-beat dad has died, and all sorts of 'other' family history is made known to him. His eyes are opened, so to speak, to a world of supers, a different kind of coming of age. And the reader makes these discoveries along with Spencer since this is told through his POV.

All this discovery is aided by 'uncle' Rourke who quickly becomes 'just Rourke' when Spencer makes a discovery of his own... lately, his pants tent freely whenever Rourke's around.

*"... all of it was because I was too distracted by your chest hair."*

I like Spencer, even though I'm not completely feeling his story. It could be the first person narrative which is used to describe this world. It could be how Spencer repeatedly asks questions to those around him, trying to figure out what the heck is going on, only to be rebuffed or distracted from the answers that *the reader wants to know too*. Or... the scene fades to black just before the big answer is about to unfold, or Spencer gets distracted by something else... No fair, it's a style of storytelling that I find frustrating.

But Spenser is pretty cool. He is a self-conscious, TV generation kid, always comparing his life to a sitcom or Bond movie, wondering how he matches up to the hero. So what if he sometimes reads a little mature for an eighteen-year-old? So what if he's failing out of high school but he speaks with SAT vocab? He's got a lot on his plate, he's been around the block with the whole grifting thing, he's figuring out the whole super being thing, and he's got moxie. In spades.

I wouldn't call this a romance and I guess that's why I'm sorta lukewarm to it. It's more an urban fantasy with some erotica thrown in, what with all the free-flowing randiness without love thing (for Spencer, I think it's the grifting that gets him the horniest). It's so hard to rate this... some things worked, some didn't. In the end, I wasn't especially in love with this world or its delivery.

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## Mel says

For those of you who are looking for a quick contemporary m/m romance: skip this.

Yes, the main character is attracted to men, but there's very little romance and *Coyote's Creed* is definitely urban fantasy. The plot and world building take the forefront.

And what a wonderfully original world it is: Fae and shifters, gods and sorcerers, feuds and fate and most importantly: tricks.

Spencer Crane is an 18 year old card swindler who's trying to divide his time between his cards, catatonic mother and detention. News about the death of his no good father turns his world upside down and suddenly it's like he's the star in his own horror movie.

I LOVED Spencer. Loved his dry tone narrative, his wit, his humor. Adored his hornines and his fear for zombies. Was touched by his love for his mother and his ability to grow. Spencer was a wonderful protagonist.

Besides him the story was filled with interesting secondaries with a certain toe stubbing Coyote as my favorite.

The plot was engaging and the world was certainly intriguing but at some parts I was thoroughly confused. And not only because Spencer is left in the dark, but also because it was just too much, too fast that too little of it made sense (I still don't get the importance of a Phouka king (view spoiler)). A few less "huh?"-moments and this book would have gotten a 5 star rating.

All in all: this story was an engaging and, most of all, fun read. I'm very much looking forward to the sequel.

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## ♣ Irish Smurfétté ♣ says

Full reviewage on Prism Book Alliance®

Let me spell out the challenge this book presents in terms of review: by chapter three, I knew it was going to be quite a feat to somehow give you a sense of what this story is all about and avoid spoilers at the same time. The way this whole ride begins, the set-up, caused my jaw to drop while a grin formed, and this happened I don't know how many times. Sparkling storytelling and wondrously wily writing are the solid rails upon which this train keeps a rollin' along, adjusting speed and always moving forward.

*The voice is muffled through the door, but I'm very aware of where I am now. The door opens, dim light eking into the room at a merciful pace.*

Magical word mixology, yo. I just wanted to give you a wee bitty taste. You don't yet know the hundredth of it. ;)

The world building is colorful, surefooted, every nook and cranny filled in, all of it resulting in a place that feels lived in, used, saddled with centuries-old customs and yet holds promise for refreshingly unexpected change and possibility, good or bad.

The same is true for the characters, this mix of creature/shifter/human/I-don't-even-know-what-you-are types that coexist and collide, sometimes in secret, sometimes not so much. Their attitudes, their roles in creating the changing atmospheres and scenery, with every personality unmistakable, and there are quite a few of them. Cheeky, clever, funny, poignant, dastardly, downright evil, blinded by greed or the belief in destined rewards, some see the forest and some can't even navigate around a tree without being stymied. Lawdy, this was fun. :D

This is also one of the best examples of first person point of view storytelling. The partnership between the

author and our man (sometimes man-child) Spence hooked me, drew me right in, and kept me, close, for the entire time. Spencer is observant, energetic, horny, intelligent, empathetic, skeptical, and sometimes surprised by the things he finds out about himself. He makes it possible to see beyond his own view of the myriad events, relationships, lies, surprises, and plans throughout this story.

I love the mix of modern City living with what feels like old world governed rules and hierarchies built into the history of this world, supernatural and regular folk alike. The recognizable touchstones of the modern make me feel like a part of the supernatural which, yeah, uh huh, FUN.

*... thanks to the conversation with Shiko, my brain is overfocused on favorite lines from "The Princess Bride". Damn it, why did that have to be such a quotable movie?*

Poor Spence often finds himself quoting TV shows and other cultural references. Sometimes they save him, sometimes, well, he ends up having to wing it. I like a guy who can wing it, or at least tries.

The chemistry and humor, the lust and caring, and the excitement and gentleness twixt Spencer and Rourke make for an interesting examination of an unexpected connection. Or is it? Unexpected, I mean. ;) Their relationship goes through organic ups and downs, most of the time due to everything I've already described here. Needless to say, 'boring' is not ever a word I would suggest in describing them.

I don't read a lot of stories with leads who are 18, as our man Spencer is, as many of them forget the adult side of the equation of someone at that age. Yep, they often struggle for control over their new adult lives but they sometimes manage to do it, and that is on full display here. Don't get me wrong, Spence often flails back and forth across the line between childhood and adulthood, but he tries and sometimes succeeds, his journey nonstop – yep, you guessed it – FUN. Which isn't to say that this story is without darker moments, loss, difficult change and even more difficult choices, because they play their roles, too.

The twists, they keep a'comin'! All the way to the very end. Heh!

There are a few instances, some scenes, where I was like whoa Nelly, what just happened? The details were coming fast and furious without helpful context, history, or immediate follow-up. This is consistent with the approach in this storytelling which made me feel fully involved, except for these rare moments when I had to stop and let the dust settle.

But never mind that because, really, none of those lessened my utter satiation from experiencing this story through Spencer's heart and mind and, dare I say it, soul.

One of my favorite lines:

*"Oh God, this is how the zombie apocalypse starts." Damn it, I should've paid more attention to Romero.*

This is one of hundreds of examples of why this is a timeless story. Seriously. The references are endless and always warranted, their origins from all decades. More fun for me. Shocker, I know. :D

This is a complex world with untold (or told, really, by many, many people) centuries-long feuds, clans with connections and relationships that would make any family tree maker tremble in fear, and an 18-yr old who seems to have been forced into the middle of it all, like a newly discovered planet, so bright and full of potential and danger and energy. I was the embodiment of ceaseless curiosity while reading. See how that works? Brilliant.

### **Jenni Lea says**

You know what this story is? It's a giant ball of pure 100% Grade-A fun! The entertainment value alone is worth 4 stars. And Spencer's (the MC) voice is refreshing. The self-deprecating humor is unique and appealing. There is just something about breaking through the fourth wall that really appeals to me. Kinda like the in the movie Ferris Bueller. And c'mon, who DIDN'T like that movie?

I enjoyed the hell outta this book!

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### **Christina says**

3.5 Stars

All my love for this book is because of Spencer. His narration sucked me right in. He's a witty smart-ass that has a line for everything. Add to this his love for tv and movie troupes, his fear of the impending zombie apocalypse, and you have one funny and adorable mc.

This was a unique world full of tricksters, story-tellers, and a feud that has been going on for several hundred years with Spencer smack in the middle of it all. In the beginning I was bored, and at times confused. I thought the entire idea of Spencer's little "assignment" as the Speaker took up too much time and dragged. After the 40% - 50% mark the book really took off and the last 15%, was freakin fantastic!

I wish there was more explanation of what each of these races could do and the powers they possess. It was too obscure for my liking. I also didn't fully grasp the importance of the story-telling. We were told how important it was and saw firsthand the power of these stories, but it just didn't resonate that strongly with me. For the most part, I let go of these issues and concentrated on Spencer.

Of note: this is UF through and through, not a romance. There is also a very large age difference between the mc's. Rourke (view spoiler) This may bother some readers.

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### **Plainbrownwrapper says**

10/05/15 -- I just reread this book in preparation for finally reading the rest of the series, and I enjoyed it just as much as the first time. Fast, funny, sexy, and intricate. Great entertainment!

My original review from 1/26/13:

Man, I love this book. This is SUCH a fun book.

This sentence, though, had me really chuckling:

"“Did he or did he not try to stab you with the Bloom of Hasseth so that he could feed your soul to the Crevasse of Screaming Diamonds and in return find the Finger of Guk’san?”

LOL!

Not just one, but THREE different trickster races inhabit this book. Understandably, then, there are non-stop double and triple and quadruple crossing, long and short and medium cons, tricks and riddles and conundrums and just about every kind of puzzle you can think of. Not to mention never-ending references to TV and movie and general pop-cultural tropes, and at least one zombie. Good stuff.

I can't even think of anything to complain about -- and y'all know how I love to complain. This book is fast, witty, intelligent, snarky, entertaining, and keeps you glued to the page. I can't even complain about the use of present tense, and that usually irritates the heck outta me. In this case, though, it just enhances the immediacy and driving force of the narrative voice.

This has a few very sexy scenes in it (plus a whole lot of sex that happens off screen), but it should NOT be confused with a romance novel. This is urban fantasy with sex. If you like urban fantasy, if you like intelligent and witty writing, and if you feel like having a good time, you should check this out. My only fear is that the next book in the series can't possibly be this good, since its main character will be a sorcerer rather than a trickster. But I'll be reading it anyway.

This gets a happy 4.5 stars from me. If the sequel is as good as this one, I may have to raise the rating here up to 5 to reward consistency in excellence.

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### **MsMiz (Tina) says**

This one gets a 4.5 from me. It hit everything...humor, gods, sorcerers, worlds, Coyotes, Kitsune, Phouka, tricks, griftering, loss, betrayal, family - all of this in a contemporary setting.....I just really loved this book! Demont did an excellent job with Spencer - in all of the new learning he was doing, he never lost sight of who he was. He learned, adapted and remained true. I actually enjoyed the relationship between Rourke and I cannot wait to read more from this series.

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### **Furio says**

This novel is far from perfect but it has that unmistakable quality that keeps one awake at night to finish it.

After "House of Stone" I was expecting quite a lot from Mr Demont and he did not disappoint me.

Gone are the usual M/M romances, usually written by women, with their childish conflicts and impossibly conflicted characters.

Gone are the closeted gay men who suddenly discover they are falling hard for a dark, brooding, impossibly gorgeous vampire/werewolf/werecat/were-I-don't-know-what.

Gone are all the stereotypes that clutter most of M/M stuff, be they fantasy, romance or horror.

Last but not least, gone are the very short unsatisfying novellas sold for 6, 8, 10 or more dollars.



The general setting of this new series is the same as that of House of Stone, even if none of those characters appears here: it is just the same unidentified American city where any possible kind of supernatural creature lives side by side with unaware humans.

Spencer is an eighteen-year-old boy, struggling to make the several loose threads in his life meet until he discovers the non human world of which he is part, being a half blood, a discovery that plunges him in further trouble, headfirst.

The author manages to set a breathtaking rhythm that never falters: every single page is packed with events that flow unerringly; the pacing is perfect and keeps the reader thrilled with exactly the right amount of humour (often very dumb humour), romance and adventure. The writing is perfect in that it never hinders the fast flowing of the plot; the language is informal, easy, proficient.

Spencer is adorable. At first I was disappointed: it is hard for me to relate with someone so young, so different, so ravenous in his indiscriminating bi-sexual appetites; the main character of House of Stone was much closer to me. As pages flew by I came to love him, though. He is funny but not shallow, smart but not perfect, well aware of his shortcomings and often incapable of avoiding mistakes he is perfectly aware he is making.

The other characters are less developed but act as an accomplished chorus for him.

Spencer's sexual drive is an essential theme of this work.

There are some extremely graphic sex scenes: they are very well done and I enjoyed them but they could put off other readers.

What flaws there are, are minor. The supernatural lore is quite vague, a device that Mr Demont sometimes exploits to create sudden plot twists that are not completely convincing. There are some godlike creatures who play a relevant role in speeding the plot to its end; I never could stomach gods in fantasy novels and, despite Mr Demont's skill, they were an unwelcome addition in this novel as well.

Spencer CONSTANTLY breaks the fourth wall to relay his thoughts to the reader. I did not find it objectionable but some readers might.

What I did find objectionable is that in doing so Spencer is occasionally wise beyond his years, meaning that we are catching a glimpse of the author's thoughts and not of those of a fictional eighteen-year-old character.

I mentioned what I consider to be flaws for the sake of a fully informative review but I feel I can recommend this book to anyone (gay or not) who loves fantasy novels. Despite the sex scenes I consider it suitable for older teens as well.

Now my expectations are really high and I hope Mr Demont will be able to deliver accordingly. In the meantime, let us enjoy this ride.

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## **Breann says**

FUN!

And surprisingly super hot. I don't know why it was surprising, I guess I just wasn't expecting a UF to be so sexy. And, damn, it was. BONUS!

OMG. I love being inside of Spencer's head. I could live there for a long, long time.

**"I tend to prepare for the unexpected by using television tropes as guidelines"**

His inner thoughts were just as funny, witty and refreshing as the dialogue. His trickster smarts and constant TV references as a real-life guide, make for an all time favorite character. Highly likeable and highly entertaining.

When Spencer learns of his father's death he's thrust into this world of tricksters. Their family friend, Rourke, a Phouka, is the one to break the news that Spencer is a Coyote and then guides Spencer into this new world he's now become a part of.

**""Is this a big joke, Rourke? 'Cause I'll try not to be mad if it is. I mean, you're the one who convinced me to do this, you drove me here, and all of it was because I was too distracted by your chest hair.""**

Again, Spencer's narrative voice is awesome. So there is an obvious attraction between Spencer and Roarke. There is a huge age gap. Huge! So... why all of a sudden are they ready to get it on? I don't know. Dad died so let's be together, I suppose? I think it may have been the fact that now Spencer knows the truth (mostly) about who he really is. So Roarke goes for it. Holy hotness, does he go for it. Even though Roarke is older and in a very high position among the Phouka, there were some surprises in the bedroom that I was quite pleased about.

Now, I've read my fair share of shifter/furry books and I *love* the trickster thing going on here. It was different and made for one hell of a good time. Spencer and the secondary characters were engaging, clever and their dialogue was just plain funny. With the constant tricks and scams I couldn't tell which way was up sometimes. I would try and rehash the plot a bit, but really, I would butcher it. I was definitely confused at some points. This is a story that needs your undivided attention to really get the full picture.

Amongst all the fun I never expected to cry at the end. But I dare anyone *not* to cry! I do love a bittersweet, HFN ending. Especially when everything fits. It may not be tied up in a pretty bow, but nothing else would have felt genuine with who Spencer is.

With that, I'm off to investigate book 2.

So, I'll leave you with this little insight from the hero himself:

**"Fate's on my side, man, I'm the hero. Don't you watch TV?"**

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**Julio Genao says**

**ready, steady, fuck me, go.**

this book was shot out of a cannon directly into my fuckin' *face*.

i don't even know where to start; i'm completely flummoxed.

let's start with *awesome*. it was awesome. demont's strength is in crafting intricately balanced capers that draw upon about a thousand years of european fantasy lore to produce americana so vibrant and exciting i never know whether to whoop or get the lube.

and he is in fine form, here.

man, i have the *only* writeyboner for this guy.

the beginning's kinda bumpy, prose-wise; he makes some choices i wouldn't have, throughout; our hero is far, far cleverer than i can credit even in an urban fantasy.

but *holy christ* is this good shit.

i was by turns scandalized, aroused, creeped-out, vaguely squicked, and *utterly, utterly amused*.

\*gets faraway look\*

...yeah. shit gets real.

and real funny, too. charmingly greasy and hokey, like:

what do you call a blonde skeleton in a closet?

(view spoiler)

baddaboom, motherfuckers!

\*goes to have slightly inappropriate and highly amusing sexorz with an arcane high school student\*

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**Tara♥ says**

Wonderful. Truly wonderful!

A massive thank you to Francesca for recommending this one to me. I will repay her for her excellent advice with at least three pints\*.

\*Note: I have not specified what will be in the pints, this book has thought me some things.

Urban Fantasy is one of my absolute favourite genres and when I stumbled into the wonder that is m/m I stopped reading so much of it. This week I realised just how much I missed discovering new worlds. Don't

get me wrong, I have read some really good fantasy m/m in the last year but it has been a long, long time since I was actually dreading the end of a book because I didn't want to leave the world that I had just been introduced to. I've spent the last month rereading books that made me feel that way when I first read them and now I've found another one and I am overjoyed. Overjoyed I tell you!!

So where to begin?

Coyote's Creed is set in a world that is full of tricksters and feuds. Everyone has an agenda and nothing is as it seems. Spencer Jensen Crain finds himself rather unceremoniously thrown into this world, this really very confusing world, and is expected to navigate it while having not one clue what is going on. We learn as Spencer learns and like Spencer sometimes I had no idea what was going on and who could be trusted. It was so much fun.

So what have we got?

He have the best of the tricksters is what we got!!

Father Coyote and his clan obviously.

**"We aren't criminals. Well, we are, but we're the good kind!"**

The Kitsune. My first contact with the foxes outside Teen Wolf.

**"Bunch of uppity bastards who need more than one tail so they can hide the sticks they've got shoved up their asses."**

And the Fae, who in this come in the form of the Phouka.

**"I rather miss the Dogs, personally. Absolute honesty can make for such intricate deception, don't you find? A web of truths is so much harder to navigate, because you never know quite where you are."**

Spencer is half coyote and even though he is the greenest of green when it comes to this world he has more than one trick up his sleeve. I think Spencer is my new favourite (I really am very fickle). He is great at getting into trouble but when needed the Fates are on side to get him out of it. He has a way of getting people who shouldn't be helping him to help and he has a knack of getting people to talk. A knack that is way more important than you would think. But Spencer's other half is human and that half makes him wholly unpredictable and also really sweet at times.

**"May love and laughter light your days, and warm your heart and home. May good and faithful friends be yours, wherever you may roam. May peace and plenty bless your world with joy that long endures. May all life's passing seasons bring the best to you and yours."**

There is a lot going on in this book. You are being given a huge amount of information and only some of that information correlates to what you may think you know about the supernatural beings that are mentioned, so it means you have got to really pay attention, but for me it's what made this so enjoyable to read. It kept me

on my toes and I love when a new twist is added to stories that I've heard before.

**"This world, after all, is not the dream of a sleeping child. In the stories I will tell of it, it will be a world that was a broken mirror, where a recluse forever danced toward a frozen river, and the Kitsune that will be in the world after this one will be the same foxes and yet different. So many worlds lie between that world of legend and this one, but some things have remained constant for the foxes. It will be up to you to discover which is which."**

Another winner for me in this was Rourke. I'm pretty sure the main reason is that he is Irish but also I love me a Fae character in books. I love that the Fae cannot lie because I find myself questioning absolutely everything they say, turning it around and around in my head trying to pick out what they are not saying. They are the most untrustworthy beings ever and they are so much fun to read.

Also have to say that I really liked the relationship between Rourke and Spencer. Controversial I know, but I'm not gonna lie, it was kinda hot. There. I said it.

More!! I want more. This series has royally screwed up my bank holiday reading plans. James is up next and by the sounds of things it will be sans Spencer but there will be sorcerers so SCORE!!

**"When a trickster pulls an Emerald in the Snow, a Ra'keth accepts a truth which terrifies them more than anything."**

**"Uh...their power?"**

**"No. Their humanity."**

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## **Nina says**

EDIT: That's not true! I lied shamelessly. I don't care about what happens next. The setting was very enjoyable and it was a fun read, but if I couldn't connect with the characters and didn't love the writing, why would I read the sequel? Many people liked it even less than this one. I can't imagine how it would possibly be better, and if I can read great books, I'm certainly not going to settle for average ones.

i am preplexed. this could have been so much better, but there were things that didn't make sense, things that weren't explained, characters (rourke! argh! die!) i didn't like - at all.

but i am also quite intrigued and curious as to where this might go in the next books and if the love story in lightning rod will convince me as this one didn't.

recommended for its originality and a few funny one-liners.

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## **Kelly H. (Maybedog) says**

Coyote's Creed

"Five, five, five, five, let's sing a song about five." that's from Sesame Street in case you aren't a fan of PBS. this book is easily five stars. It's hilariously funny, laugh out loud in some parts, and very clever. Spencer is a big TV addict and his life is filled with references to shows and, in particular, common tropes associated with plots and characters and action. He constantly refers to himself as the hero and what should happen to him, such as having amazing powers, when in reality he's convinced he's going to die and how that is just not fair.

A typical quote:

"I slumped in my seat. 'Thank God. I mean, I don't want to be the first to die. The funny guy always dies first, for shock value, you know? Rourke would get killed next, because it'd be a hero sacrifice or something.' I motion to Shiko. 'You'd live, though, unless you had sex.'"

Another time he's convinced he's going to die because as a half breed he's a minority, has had too much sex recently, he's walking through a cemetery alone under a full moon and is the funny guy of course. He just knows the zombies are waiting to kill him.

Spence tells his story talking to you the reader, saying things like he's not going to go into details about something because it's just embarrassing and you don't need to know. Or he'll share something's along the lines of him whimpering in the face of danger and then says something like, "Fuck you, you know you would, too." He knows he's not hero material, and he's teased by the other characters about being dumb, but he reads (Wikipedia has great synopses of books and it's reading, right?) and he's good at Scrabble he claims.

His reactions are normal and expected behavior except for his insane lust. He doesn't suddenly confess his undying love for his romantic partner as soon as they (early on) which is refreshing. There is a lot of jumping into bed and jumping intothecback of cars and jumping to the floor for very hot (and informative) sex. (He explains the sensations and specifics of the first time he does each thing of gay sex. And he's bi! How many heroes are bi? Well my new hero is. )

The plot hinges on some science that is normally ignored in stories due to convenience. The realism in that regard is fabulous. He's a realistic teen boy, too, in many ways, always horny, lazy, smart ass, and convinced that the Zombie Apocalypse is likely because there is science proving its a possibility. And he takes care if his mom who is very ill. He even cries when people he loves are hurt or he's tripped or something, although he tries not to admit it.

I worried about the extreme difference in age and the sort of familial relationship they once had. But somehow it worked. I think removing the male/female dynamics and sexism helped and also that the younger guy is pretty much in control and somewhat using the older guy. He takes advantage of people but he knows this and does feel guilty about it. He tries to change with Rourke but he's a teenage boy and there's sex involved. Really hot sex, did I mention that? At one point I decided I was a gay man cleverly disguised. (Though I think I would have given myself fake breasts that were bigger than my real ones which have more in common with kiwis than melon. If this kind of thing makes you uncomfortable, don't read the book.)

I can't tell you how much I loved this book. It was one if the best books I've read in a long time. Highly recommended if you're good with explicit gay sex and hearing a teenage biy's innermost thoughts.

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