



Reaper's Touch

Eleri Stone

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Abby is a Ranger, part of an elite group who defend the border against Reapers—humans infected with a parasite that turns them into mindless cannibals. Rangers are immune to Reaper infection, and as one of the only female Rangers, Abby is expected to settle down and breed more Rangers—a fate she's keen to avoid. When she's ambushed on the plains, she's ready to go out with guns blazing—until a mysterious, handsome cowboy rides to her rescue.

Jake has his own motives for helping Abby, beyond aiding a damsel in distress. He's a Reaper, and while he's learned to wrest control of his mind from the parasite, the effects won't last without a permanent cure. And he needs Abby to get it.

Abby and Jake are natural enemies and unlikely partners. But when their search reveals a conspiracy between Reapers and the rich industrialists who own the mountain cities, they must work together to find the cure—or lose the border, and each other, forever.

Reaper's Touch Details

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Author : Eleri Stone

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From Reader Review Reaper's Touch for online ebook

Ian says

DNF @ 50% ...

This book is well written. The whole zombies and cowboys thing is actually kind of interesting.

...but the book felt kind of rapey to me. I mean when the hero who kidnapped the heroine is roughing her up with a raging hard-on...that's rapey, right?

OK I only read 50% which is my absolute minimum for rating a book...maybe it comes good in the second half. Maybe that accounts for at least some of the high ratings. Maybe I don't want to find out.

Mara says

Really nice idea behind the book, an interesting world-building, characters that you could both believe in and root for. There's not much depth and growth for them, but then the book isn't that long. She's not my usual strong woman, she's merely stubborn, but I'll take that over the rest of them :). I would have appreciated a bit more strength in her (she doesn't sound real in that contest, but at the same time she's so human), and a bit less "woe is me" in him.

I'm somewhat sorry for the ending... I am strange, am I not? :P

Thanks Naysa...and Linda :)

Bex 'n' Books says

Book review by Nicole McCurdy for Bex 'n' Books

Disclosure: This ebook was provided by the author in exchange for an HONEST and not necessarily positive review.

I love rotten, decaying, flesh-eating zombies as much as the next girl (apart from Walking Dead, just could not get into that show) but this book is just...wow. I'm speechless, or rather wordless. Honestly, I could wax lyrical about how fantastic this book is.

Fast-paced action barrels right from the word go pretty much till the last chapter; it never takes a breather or slows momentum, it just spirals and gathers speed and snowballs into a full on movie in book form with a lot of gruesome brain matter and blood spraying a few people.

Eleri Stone has managed in her own approach to make a zombie book rather unique with our hardened heroine Abby being one of few extremely rare female Ranger's, guarding civilian lives against the perpetual threat of super speedy limb-gnawing Reaper's in a male dominated misogynistic profession. As she harbours something in her that leaves her immune to Reaper's infection she is told she should be sheltered somewhere safe, breeding with any willing male, popping out little immune Ranger babies to populate the front lines.

Abby is such a three dimensional character. She comes across as stoic and battle-weary but there's a depth to her, she's lonely and cynical but strong, intelligent and rather nurturing when it comes to looking after the younger fighters. When it comes to Jake she's torn and confused and unsure of herself, so unlike how she portrays herself in front of the other Ranger's. He makes her question everything but in a good way. Our rather unconventional male protagonist Jake had all the elements of a terrific hero too. He's selfless, sexy as sin, can kick ass when needed and has the whole tortured soul thing going on for him. He too has a lot of hidden depths but they're a lot more fun to discover for yourself than have me spoil it all for you.

Although there are strong elements of romance in *Reaper's Touch*, don't be fooled into thinking this is another *Warm Bodies* or *Twilight-for-zombies* type of deal; it's so much more. Think *World War Z* with *Buffy* as the lead and a political conspiracy thrown in for good measure. It's brilliantly well written, witty and addictive and more than once I caught myself reading faster and faster when it came to a particularly suspenseful scene in order to see the outcome.

If you're an infected-with-a-deadly-zombie-making-disease loving reader, one-click this beauty you won't regret it.

Heather C says

Set in a sort of alternate American history slash dystopian slash steampunk-ish world, *Reaper's Touch* tells the story of Abby, one of the only female Rangers, who falls for the very "thing" she is tasked to eliminate...a Reaper. Reapers are humans who have been infected with a sentient parasite which turns them into mindless, cannibalistic creatures...and Rangers carry some kind of immunity to the infection. For centuries, Jake has fought the rider within and has finally gained some control over his mind and body. When Jake happens across Abby away from her team of other Rangers, he kidnaps her to use in creating an experimental cure for the parasite. But Abby can't help seeing Jake's humanity and is determined to help cure him...even at the risk to herself.

I absolutely loved the setting and the idea of this story. I didn't fully read the blurb and was TOTALLY stunned when it was revealed that Jake was a Reaper! OMG! I can not voice how hooked I was when I read that scene...although I was already completely hooked after the scene with Jake and Abby in the alley, but now I COULD NOT PUT THE BOOK DOWN! Jake was a Reaper! And should not have been able to talk and look as sexy as he did. Gah!

I also really loved the tension and the banter between Jake and Abby. Of course Abby was a bit "all over the place" and couldn't decide if she wanted to make-out with Jake or shoot him...so she did both. There was plenty of romance in there too, but it was a long journey before Abby and Jake were finally able to "be together".

I loved how there was never a huge "info dump" and the author gives the reader little, tiny pieces of the puzzle at the absolute perfect moments in the story...bits that kept me intrigued and interested and trying to figure everything out THE ENTIRE TIME. Sometimes its hard to read this type of world setup because there is just information overload at the beginning, however, this was not like that AT ALL.

I am a little conflicted about my feelings for the ending. On one hand, I thought it was a bit drawn out (once Jake and Abby go back to her team), and on the other hand, I feel it was rushed (where Jake goes through the cure). I know, I'm contradicting myself a bit here, but I wanted to see MORE of that bit about Jake! And I wanted to see more of Abby and Jake together after that. Ugh! Those are truly my only two complaints about the entire story, everything else was AWESOME and seemed like I read it way to fast for being such a long

book.

I can't wait to read Lyle's book next!

Reviewed for The Blogger Girls

Wendy says

"Reapers Touch" by Eleri Stone which I won from Goodreads Giveaways blends a post apocalyptic landscape with the paranormal, a romance and a dash of steampunk. It begins when Abby, a star-marked Ranger is sent as a courier to the garrison at Fort Hill after helping to save the passengers of a crashed dirigible from a Reaper attack. Stopping over in New Providence she never expects to be saved from the dangerous advances of a rancher's son by a natural enemy, a sentient Reaper or that her life will be turned upside down when he enlists her help to recover scientists hidden in the Barrens who are working on a cure for the infectious parasite.

Jake, a Reaper who has arrested control of his mind from the parasite will do anything to get a permanent cure for his condition. After rescuing Abby, he coerces her into helping him and an unlikely partnership is born but Jake never expects that he will not only become infatuated with the feisty Ranger but her protector.

With vivid imagery Eleri Stone has created a world where the wealthy, powerful and selfish live in the mountains high above the plains where a force of star-marked Rangers have been hired to protect its inhabitants from Reapers, humans infected by a parasite that's made them animalistic, fast and quick to heal. In a plot that merges a taste of the old west and steampunk, the action never stops as guns blaze, Reapers and Rangers clash and Abby fights not only the enemies who threaten her life, but her growing attraction to Jake. In a story that's mesmerizing and action-packed from the first chapter to the last, tension and suspense are broken by the blossoming romance between Abby and Jake as well as with wise cracks and wry humour.

Like the plot the characters are well-developed, realistic and complex with all their flaws, faults and strengths especially Abby, the only female Ranger in her group who refuses to be relegated to another fort to breed young star-marked babies. Far from being an innocent virgin, she's tough, clever, impulsive and brave; a young woman who has learned to survive against all odds. The mutant Jake is resourceful, dangerous and blunt. As a Reaper he's endowed with heightened senses, abnormal strength and speed; the parasite inside him hungry, unreasoning and cruel when he can't control it. Because of his strength-of-will, protectiveness and seeming honesty, Abby comes to trust Jake as their passion grows. Short, wiry Marston a Reaper who controls the younglings that are attacking the forts is a calculating adversary with depraved appetites who supports Tomas, the self-proclaimed leader who's ambitious, powerful and treacherous. All the personalities of the characters in this novel add passion, power and drama to a captivating tale you can't put down.

"Reapers Touch" , a story that has natural enemies and unlikely partners finding love in the midst of a conspiracy that has Reapers and the rich industrialists in mountain cities, working together to find a cure for a deadly parasite that can strip mankind of its humanity, is imaginative and unique. It's an intoxicating tale that's well-worth reading.

Barbara Elsborg says

Really enjoyed this one. It was different. I loved the world building and the description. The writing was excellent. The pace was good. I thought the tension was good too. The relationship between Abby and Jake worked perfectly. It's not easy to maintain a reader's interest when your main protags are at each other's throats much of the time - trust is a huge issue, but the author did it brilliantly. I had this book free from RT in Dallas and I'm so glad I did because I would have missed a treat. This isn't a cover that draws me in, nor is the subject matter but it grabbed my interest in the first page and didn't let go. I look forward to reading more by this author.

Cyn (chinchilla hunter, shameless reader of trash) says

DNF @ I don't even know. Somewhere not far in.

Interesting concept but.. he kidnaps her? She doesn't even know his name? She doesn't even ask. No.

Lanie (Lanies Book Thoughts) says

Abby is a ranger, she's immune to the "reaper" parasite, her job is to track down and kill reapers. Reaper's are like zombies. These reapers though, have a mind, they're able to tactically work together and ambush people, so way smarter than zombies. Think of them like frenzied cannibals who are essentially immortal. Only men become reapers, the parasite just instantly kills women, which is a total bummer.

Abby our heroine is about 27, she's very thickheaded and has bull-eyes painted on her for attracting danger. She's pretty rare, women reapers are pretty much unheard of, because of this she gets stuck doing a messenger job for her unit, which is how she meets Jake. Abby and Jake are kinda an amusing pair, they definitely play off each other through the book. You have other characters such as Doc, Lyle, Capt and of course the evil scientists! All of them have their own personality which comes through with their interactions with Abby.

Reaper's Touch is definitely a paranormal romance, it's very sweet. It actually reminds me of beauty and the beast to be honest, but it has so many more layers going on. I really enjoyed the story from start to end, I finished it in a sitting. It's a fun mix of cowboy wild west meets walking dead, cept you don't have any annoying characters you'd like to kill off, other than the bad guys;). I really was leery about this book because of the whole zombie thing, but there wasn't anything disgusting or horrific really mentioned. The story was extremely strong and the focus was definitely on the plot, not much emphasis on the romance part. There was no insta-love, it developed over time.

I'd definitely read more of Abby and Jake if another book comes out. I'd think this book would be fine for anyone over 16, theres nothing particularly sexual going on and nothing is in great detail. It's more like cutesy kisses and mention of sex, thats bout it. You see worse on TV.

I received this book in exchange for an honest review (LoP or Lovers of Paranormal)-GoodReads.com.

FV Angela says

Review originally posted at <http://fictionvixen.com/review-reaper...>

When I started this review I kept trying to figure out how to categorize this romance. According to Carina Press's website its dystopian, post-apocalyptic and paranormal. But when I started reading it also had a steampunk and old timey western feel to it. In all honesty it's a mesh of all these genres. Which works for me since I'm always looking for something out of the box.

Reaper's Touch tells the story of Abby, a Ranger whose job is to kill Reapers and Jake, the Reaper who she slowly falls in love with. Reapers are zombie like creatures who are mindless killing machines and feast on human flesh. They are the unfortunate humans who have been bitten and contracted a parasite that takes over their lives and creates a blood lust and craving for violence. Abby is one of the only women Rangers, as most women aren't birthed star born. When she is sent on an errand by her Captain she gets into trouble in the neighboring town and is rescued by a cowboy named Jake.

Little does Abby know, Jake is no ordinary traveling cowboy, but one of the few sentient Reapers and he is on a mission to find a cure. As one of the first infected by the parasite, Jake has lived a long time. He only has vague memories and impressions of what he did when he was first taken over by what he refers to as his rider, but he has learned over his long life to control his baser urges and let his human side run the show. His only hope of getting rid of the parasite in his system is to let a group of scientists experiment on him to come up with a cure. What he needs is a Ranger, who are naturally immune to the parasite, to experiment on as well. That's where Abby comes in.

When they begin their journey Abby is not sure what to think about this man who is her natural enemy, but does nothing but come to her rescue and protect her time and again. Jake isn't like any other Reaper she's ever seen. For one thing, he's aware and appears to have amazing control over both his mind and body. As her fear of what he is starts to lessen, she gradually starts to get to know him and realizes that she's never actually considered who Reapers really are. Their pasts, where they came from, the family they left behind, what they were before they were bitten. She's always thought about them in abstract terms, things not people. Jake is so very different and he inspires feelings in her that she doesn't want to feel, but can't help herself. Their romance develops very slowly. Very, very slowly. It isn't until the last half of the book until they even start to acknowledge to themselves or each other that they have a desire or need for the other. And if you're worried about zombie sex scenes, don't. I wouldn't call this a sexy romance as it takes most of the book for this couple to come together in that way.

I was taken with how well Ms. Stone allowed Abby and Jake's relationship to develop and unfold. She's standoffish and untrusting and he's a little scary at times as he's battling internally for control of himself. They go through some perilous and brutal times as they journey across the wild west and fight both blood thirsty Reapers and human scientists with an agenda. While this IS a romance, what I liked the most about this story was the world building and different take on the zombie/ dystopian genre. While it did start out slow for me at first, the more I read the more I enjoyed myself. This world is cold and barren, with only subtle hints of steampunk. The reader never really sees the steampunk elements as they are only really spoken of and there are just glimpses of such things as airships. The only way to really describe it is a cowboy western where ordinary citizens and survivors of the parasitic plague are living in small towns and forts while the elite live amongst the mountains.

In the end I very much enjoyed this read and would recommend to anyone looking to branch out of their historical and contemporary rut and try something different. Final Grade- B+

Favorite Quote:

"I'm a Reaper and you're a Ranger. That's the plain truth. Call me a coward if you want to, but I was never so chicken shit that I couldn't face the truth."

RachelW (BamaGal) says

3.5 Stars. I enjoyed this. It's not perfect, by any means; but it was a nice read. Gritty and a pretty good take on the good guy/bad guy theme. An alternate wild, Wild West, a bit of steampunk, and reapers (kind of like zombies). Fun and imaginative.

Barbara Ann says

Reaper's Touch is one of those unusual, creative novels that doesn't neatly fit into one particular genre. Instead it's a genre mash-up incorporating elements from western, paranormal romance, dystopian, and steam punk fiction.

Stone pulled me into an alternate universe replete with an old west landscape, zombie invaders, and airships all surrounding a centralized government where the affluent reside in extravagance while the rest of society live in harsh conditions struggling to eek out a living and fend off the zombie-like, cannibalistic creatures called "Reapers."

To keep civilians safe, "Rangers," a select group of men and women who patrol the country on horseback, are the military force charged with fighting and killing the mindless Reapers whose bloodlust and need for flesh drive them to attack humans. However, not just anyone can be a Ranger. They are the "star-marked" children who are born immune to the parasitic virus that Reapers carry and cannot be turned. As a result, all star-marked children must become Rangers when they become adults. The males are not allowed to marry but are encouraged to procreate as much as possible to ensure future generations of Rangers will be on hand to protect and serve.

The protagonist, Abby, is one of the rare females born a Ranger. It's not the life she wants, but she has little choice in the matter. Her only other alternative is to settle down at one of the Ranger's forts and have children, little Rangers who will also grow up with the same limitations that have been forced upon her. No matter how much her captain encourages it, Abby stubbornly refuses to leave her post. Yes, even in this alternate world, Abby has to deal with sexist attitudes from some of the Rangers in this male-dominated field.

The war between Rangers and Reapers has been going on for centuries, but as the story progresses, Abby surprisingly learns that some of these animalistic Reapers have become sentient, like Jake, who comes to Abby's rescue several times when she is sent out on a lone mission. Initially Abby is attracted to this stranger who has become her savior until she learns what he really is. Throughout the first half of the novel, she's disgusted and repulsed by Jake who makes her his prisoner when she refuses to help him with his agenda. Even though Jake has regained control of the "rider," the Reaper side of him that thirsts for flesh and blood, he has to constantly fight these urges around Abby.

Much of the book's plot focuses on Abby and Jake's conflicting feelings for each other and the sexual tension that simmers between them. A central question in the book is whether a Reaper and a Ranger can fall

in love. I like that the story is narrated from both Abby's and Jake's perspectives because it helped me to see them both as multi-dimensional characters and be able to relate to their situation. The book does include some descriptive love scenes intended for mature readers.

When Abby and Jake form an unprecedented alliance in the quest to find a cure for the virus, they face an uphill battle, with their efforts being thwarted every step of the way. It seems not everyone wants a cure for the virus to be found. The novel is engaging and suspenseful, and along the way, Stone raises some important moral and ethical considerations for thought. She also brings awareness to the ongoing debate about women serving on the front lines in war. The conclusion eased me out of this fictitious world yet left me longing for more. After I finished the book, I felt that the world-building could have been stronger and the resolution occurred a bit too easily for my satisfaction. However, after looking at the author's Goodread's page, I noticed that she has plans to expand the novel into a series. The next installment is titled Gun Shy, but a book description hasn't been provided yet. So Stone has plenty of time to continue fleshing out this unusual, creative world that she has begun building.

Source: I received a copy of this book from the author to provide an honest review.

Regan says

I did not intend to read this story as quickly as I did, but once I started I couldn't stop. An alternate history southern U.S. swarms with Reapers, once-men who, while technically alive, are governed by a violent, cannibalistic parasite that makes them mindless killers - among other things. Rangers roam the tentative border between Reaper land and human civilization. Dedicated and immune to the Reaper's bite, but still mortal, they race to take down the flesh-eating hordes to guard the rest of humanity - even the Scrapers in their fat, luxurious cities high above the plains.

Abby's tough, one of few female rangers - most women with the star-shaped mark of the Ranger are secured in forts, reproducing the ranks. She's never wanted that life, but being a Ranger is tough. She's the only woman in her platoon and, while her fellow Rangers are her friends, she's always felt at least somewhat apart and alone. While delivering a message to a Ranger fort, she stumbles into a spot of trouble and tall, dark and competent cowboy Jake helps her stumble out of it. The attraction between them is as intense as it is complicated. Jake's a Reaper, once who's outlived the mindless carnage of his infected "youth" and survived years of torture at the hands of human scientists presumably looking for a cure for the parasite.

The push-pull denial/attraction of their relationship is delicious, the danger surrounding them very real. This is a sweet romance built inside of an imaginative "Western" world packed full of dire adventure. Recommended for fans of Moira Rogers and Kristen Callihan.

Jen (That's What I'm Talking About) says

Rating: B+ Liked It A Lot

Originally posted at That's What I'm Talking About

Review copy provided by author.

Abby is a Ranger. The star-marked Rangers have a natural immunity to Reaper bites and can even use the Reaper parasite in conjunction with their own DNA to heal. Reapers are former humans who have been

infected with a virus that turns them into zombie-like creatures. But Reapers aren't the monsters portrayed in horror films of past; they can be clever, they are fast, they don't rot and are quick healing. It is the Ranger's job to protect the nearby settlements and keep the Reapers at bay.

Abby is a lone female Ranger, and society isn't always kind to females in this alternate-world wild western. While most believe that female Rangers should be kept safe behind the gates of the fort, producing more Rangers, Abby prefers the front lines. Shunned by her captain and sent as a messenger to keep her from danger, Abby ends up in the midst of an even more hazardous plot. Fate pairs Abby with Jake, a man she describes as, "Her cowboy — dirty and disturbing and hot as hell." Jake is mysterious and a tad dangerous, but his mission seems to be a noble one, so Abby agrees to help him. Yet the secrets he keeps could end up costing Abby her life.

Reaper's Touch is something altogether new and exciting. Mostly a paranormal romance, the setting and plot are also part western and part alternate timeline; this book has something for everyone. Even though it is the first story in a new series, the world-building is seamless and gripping. Ms. Stone plunges her readers head-first into her exciting and original new world of Rangers and Reapers. Right from the get go, the reader is brought up to speed on the makings of a Ranger (especially the rare female Ranger) and perils of the Reapers; we learn about society's upper crust, the Scrapers, and life on the frontier. It is a lot to digest, but the world-building is interesting and canny. I don't know that I've read anything quite like Reaper's Touch.

The book itself is well-written, and the overall plot engrossing. I felt the tempo Ms. Stone sets is perfect - slow enough to enjoy the intricate details such as moss growing on rocks in the river - creating vivid imagery and polished scenes. But fast enough to keep me engaged and even a little anxious.

I really like Abby. She's not your typical romance heroine. Described as "not pretty," she is "one of the guys" and wants to stay that way. I like her sense of responsibility and her unwavering loyalty. She makes up her own mind, regardless of the men around her. I also admire that she won't let society dictate how she should act and feel, sometimes even going against the popular views to do what she knows to be the right thing.

Jake is equally charming. As advertised, he is dirty and disturbing. Although he moves towards his goals with a single-minded purpose, he takes time to assess each situation and move forward in a manner that isn't entirely selfish--regardless of how he portrays himself. I've never had a "thing" for cowboys, but if they are all as sexy and genuine as Jake, I may have to give the genre a try!

There are several supporting characters that add great value to the overall story. I enjoy that each seems to be upfront about who he is and what his motives are. Abby is surrounded by men who do have her best interests at heart and are willing to share some good advice with their head-strong female counterpart.

I also enjoyed some of the more emotionally rough moments. It is here where the story gains heart and depth. Ms. Stone does an excellent job of implying torture scenes without sharing the gruesome details. At one point, the shared agony of Jake and Abby is abundantly apparent through their actions, inactions, and words. My heart ached for the pair, and the entire scene was well done.

Overall, Reaper's Touch is a solid story with balanced action, story progression, and character development. Ms. Stone has created an interesting and unique mythology that is an amalgamation of many themes. Although the romance is light on smexy time, I enjoyed Abby and Jake's journey and the time taken to get to know each other. Their relationship develops over the entire book, and it felt natural. I like that the climatic battle and scenes fit the build-up. Both brute force as well as smarts and clever battle strategy give our heroes their HEA. Yet the author has created a mystery with a few unanswered questions and open ends. I look forward to see where she takes the series next!

Melindeeloo says

When Ranger Abby's captain sends her on a solo mission, her world view will shift as she crosses paths with a Reaper who has gained control of his inner parasite. And as Abby joins Jake to save scientists who are on the verge of discovering a cure for Reaperism, Abby learns that humans can be as monstrous as the monsters - and enemies can be friends and more.

I feel like Reader's Touch has only scratched the surface of Eleri Stone's Reaper world, a world which has left the wealthy living in mountain cities while the rest scrape out a living in the lowlands in perpetual danger from violent mindless flesh eating Reapers and the threat of turning Reaper themselves. Abby is a Ranger, one of a few rare humans immune to the reapers' bite, and a rare female Ranger whose only choices in life are to fight Reapers or to devote her life to breeding more Rangers.

I generally am not fond of zombie romances, but Reapers are not the typical shambling decomposing zombies - they are more on the order of possessed- so this wasn't one of those stories . I really liked both leads. Abby is a warrior but a life with limited choices hasn't hardened her heart. I really like Jake, I am a fan of honorable controlled heroes who struggle with being unworthy of their heroines- having read a couple of this author's books I can say that she does a good job with conflicted nice guy heroes. I also really like enemies to lovers stories and author Stone does a good job of building the relationship - and the sensual tension -between the pair. And by holding off the romantic payoff, there was time to build the world and the story around them.

So I really enjoyed Reaper's Touch and while this would work as a standalone, I am interested in reading more from this alternate Old West-y world with just a hint of steampunk.

Rinou says

4 stars

I loved that original universe, well thought and well written, which includes cowboys, zombies, airship, and other technology verging on steampunk. I also thought the characters were well described, very realistic and likeable, and I wanted to know how the author was going to make them happy. I wasn't disapointed.

Avis complet
