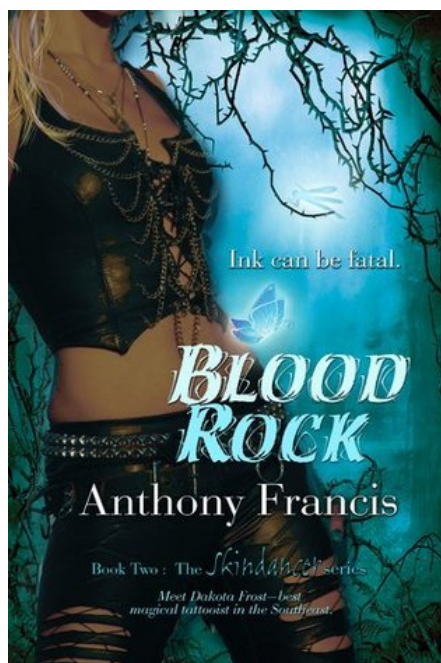




Blood Rock

Anthony Francis

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Dakota Frost is back, and the ink is about to hit the fan-again.

Graffiti comes to life in the dark heart of Atlanta's oldest cemetery, slaying one of the city's best loved vampires before the eyes of his friend Dakota Frost. Deadly magick is at work on the city's walls, challenging even the amazing power of Dakota's tattoos to contain it. The hungry, graffiti magick loves to kill, and the Edgeworld is no longer safe from its own kind.

Dakota begins a harrowing journey to save those she loves and to discover the truth behind the spreading graffiti-even if that truth offends the vampires, alienates the werekin and creates police suspicion of her every action.

Saving Atlanta may cost her everything, including custody of her "adopted" weretiger daughter, Cinnamon. But failure is not an option. If the graffiti isn't stopped, Cinnamon could be the next victim.

Blood Rock Details

Date : Published August 16th 2011 (first published January 1st 2011)

ISBN :

Author : Anthony Francis

Format : Paperback 210 pages

Genre : Fantasy, Urban Fantasy, Paranormal, Vampires

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From Reader Review Blood Rock for online ebook

Jaime says

I am a big fan of Dakota and the Magical Graffiti was awesome.

But her dating and sleeping with Calaphase made no sense. Phil and her had no big fight, and they didn't even really break up. They were simply dealing with the pains of a long distance relationship. Plus Dakota had major issues with Vampire's as lover's. It's way she ended things with Saffron. So why would she go running into the arms and bed of Cal? And killing him off was way to easy, she should have had to deal with the fallout of that rushed relationship.

Her mentor's new apprentice tried to kill her, yet Dakota not Arturus took any real action. WTF?

The whole storyline with child services taking Cinnamon was a big stretch. If they had an issue, or really cared they never would have let her leave to hospital when she was six. And with spread resources and a lack of good home's they certainly wouldn't have just shown up to take Cinnamon away. Especially since Dakota was her legal guardian and in the process of a adoption. A social worker would have already visited their home multiple times and given their assessment, so the whole she was still living at the Warehouse thing was silly. Teenager's are had to place and even harder to find a permanent adoptive home for, and in this universe Were's are seen as second class citizens it made no sense that the system got that involved.

It was to much of the world against Dakota. It just started to get silly. If the DA had been the graffiti artist or somehow connected to him the conspiracy would have made more sense.

Brittany says

This is the second in the Skindancer series. I have to say I was very excited to read this and had such high hopes but they were dashed upon some wordy rocks. This book was way to detailed and it was exhausting to read and follow all of the MANY aspects to the plot. I felt there were quite a few things that could have been omitted and made the book flow better, not seem so bogged down with side plots. One BIG part of the book that could have been deleted was the whole custody issue with Cinnamon. I also found it hard to follow some of the slang and terminology used to describe some of the scientific issues and Cinnamon's Math terms.

I have to say the writer did bring everything together at the end and none of it seemed out of place but there was just so much going on in this book I found my self wishing it would all just come to a conclusion half way through.

It did have a good plot hidden in there and leads to a great place for the third book to take place but again WAY TO MUCH was stuffed into this book. I did enjoy Dakota's relationship with 'Cally' and the surprises about Cinnamon and her education issues was a good addition¹, but I felt they were concentrated on too much an I wish the writer and done more details about Cinnamon's teacher, Vlad. I can only hope he makes more of an appearance in the second book.

Book Reading Gals says

Title: Blood Rock

Series: Skindancer Series Book #2

Stand Alone Title: recommended to read in order

Author: Anthony Francis

Genre: Romance, urban fantasy, sci-fi/fantasy

Blurb: Dakota Frost is back, and the ink is about to hit the fan-again.

Graffiti comes to life in the dark heart of Atlanta's oldest cemetery, slaying one of the city's best loved vampires before the eyes of his friend Dakota Frost. Deadly magick is at work on the city's walls, challenging even the amazing power of Dakota's tattoos to contain it. The hungry, graffiti magick loves to kill, and the Edgeworld is no longer safe from its own kind.

Dakota begins a harrowing journey to save those she loves and to discover the truth behind the spreading graffiti-even if that truth offends the vampires, alienates the werekin and creates police suspicion of her every action.

Saving Atlanta may cost her everything, including custody of her "adopted" weretiger daughter, Cinnamon. But failure is not an option. If the graffiti isn't stopped, Cinnamon could be the next victim.

Favorite quotes: "But the world has changed, and while your diplomacy leaves much to be desired, your conduct is honorable, your power considerable – and your logic plausible."

Thoughts: So I got a little delayed reading and reviewing this title, so I could backtrack and read the first book, Frost Moon. Let's say I was very impressed – it was original, fresh, and unlike anything else I had read. I loved Dakota – she's honest and tells it like it is, which are traits I love in a character. She's brash, bold, and loyal to a fault. Blood Rock picks up where Frost Moon ended, so this is a title recommended to read in order, particularly in light of all the numerous characters that make up this world.

This one did get a little complex and confusing at times, what with magical graffiti and intense metaphysics, particularly toward the end. But that would be my only issue with the book. Well, except for the deaths of some of my favorite characters! I won't say who or spoil it for anyone, but...argh! I was loving these characters! What the hell?! LOL Oh, well....we'll have to see what's in store for the future books!

Rating: B

Review by: Sarah

<http://www.thebookreadinggals.com>

AH says

Oh, Dakota! How you've changed for the better! When we last left our tattooed, 6 foot tall, death-hawked, skin dancing heroine, she was adjusting to her newly adopted were-tiger daughter, Cinnamon. Motherhood has agreed with Dakota and I loved to see her in some sort of domestic bliss for a few moments.

Blood Rock is a cool book. First of all, the world building is fantastic. This is the Edgeworld of Atlanta, a place where practitioners of magic, were, vampires, witches, and the like congregate. Edgeworld is dark and gritty. The magic is unique and well described. The paranormal creatures follow their own rules and most of them play dirty. Math geeks will enjoy this book, especially when some rather complex math concepts are described.

One of the things I loved about this book was Dakota's relationships with the other characters. Dakota made a loving mother for Cinnamon and reading about them shopping around for a school was so cute. Dakota settles for one love interest and while it was a surprising choice for me, it was a good match. Dakota's relationship with her ex-girlfriend, the vampire queen was a little strained, but understandably so.

This book had one of the more original story lines I've read in a long time. Magical Killer Graffiti – yes it sounds like a bad B movie, but very, very scary.

If you haven't read Frost Moon yet, I recommend it. Definitely read Blood Rock. Anthony Francis' books get better and better. I can't wait for him to hurry up and write Liquid Fire, book 3 of the Skindancer series.

Thankyou Netgalley and Bell Bridge Books for a review copy of this book.

Review posted on Badass Book Reviews

Cherie (Myst) says

The second installment of the Dakota Frost series sees Dakota taking on a serial killer who is using magical graffiti to kill.

While I still enjoyed the action and the characters of this book (and there was always so much going on), I found it a little more drawn out than the first book. There were so many different pieces of the final puzzle and so many feuds between different people it whitewashed it a little for me.

The whole relationship between Dakota and her ex-girlfriend annoys me too as she broke up when Saffron became a vamp but Dakota still dates vamps, yet still is pissy at her for turning.

Still a good read and will consider reading the next book in the series.

Darcy says

I love the world that this series is set in, I especially love the aspect of skindancing. It makes me wish that I could get a magical tattoo.

My favorite aspect of this book was the scenes between Dakota and Cinnamon. At times things were very awkward between the two of them, but that is to be expected when you throw together 2 people that have only known each other a short time as a family. The way they both handled the mundane aspects of life, like finding a school, talking about punishment, and boys was fun. I loved the way that Cinnamon talks with all the extra s's. For some reason this makes her seem very innocent. I also loved how Cinnamon approached school, by the end her idea of it is so different, just what you expect from someone who finally feels secure with her life.

At first I really liked the mystery with the graffiti. Just the idea of it coming to life and killing people gives me the shudders. But as the story started to drag on I got tired of it. It seemed like the graffiti came after everyone that was important to Dakota.

I found myself getting angry at all the government agencies that seemed to go after Dakota, especially when they weren't always working on the correct info.

Dakota takes some big changes in this book, with her friends, with her feelings, with her past, with her present, and especially with her future. Things are changing in this version of Atlanta, and I for one, can't

wait to see what those changes bring.

Katy says

Please note: I first read this in January 2012. I'm adding formatting and the disclosure that I received an e-galley from NetGalley in exchange for an honest review.

My synopsis: In this sequel to "*Frost Moon*," Dakota Frost now has Cinnamon living with her. As the story opens, they are trying to find a school that can handle Cinnamon – a "compulsory" weretiger (which means she cannot pass as human) who has never attended school and will need to start basically from scratch – when Dakota receives a call from the police to come quickly. She arrives only to find their friend Revenance, a vampire, trapped in some sort of magical graffiti and, despite all her best efforts, he is killed right in front of her. Things go from bad to worse as Dakota discovers this magical graffiti is turning up all over Atlanta, and that vampires, werekin and humans are all being killed by it – or have gone missing. Can Dakota figure out what is powering the magical graffiti, and how to stop it in time?

My Thoughts: This book was intense - I can't even count the number of times that I started yelling while reading this book: "What??? Why is he doing this to her? Can't she get a break?" etc. - Mr. Francis is just mean to his characters in this book! It makes me super nervous about the next book, as he's escalating the danger and problems very quickly from book one to book two – book three, "*Liquid Fire*," will probably be a real doozy. Unfortunately I do not, at this time, have any information as to when that book will be finished or available. I will say that I was again impressed with the characterizations and plot flow, and that I really love this series! Highly recommended for fans of urban fantasy and magical reality!

Dianne says

Blood Rock - Francis, Anthony

With this second Dakota Frost book, we find that Dakota is facing multiple enemies or so it seems. So much happens in this book that is is nearly too much for the average brain to process.

Dakota is facing graffiti that is coming alive and killing vamps and weres and also just plain humans. Dakota has here adopted daughter taken away from her. She loses her new lover because of the graffiti. The Genty is after her and she ends up with a new position on the Council.

There are many surprises in this book even if there is so much action you nearly can't process it. I just wish that the author, who is a computer scientist and a PHD, would take the mere mortals that may not have PHD.'s into consideration and just a tone down the Math and scientific stuff. But that's just me. I would appreciate it so I don't feel the need to skim so much!

With that complaint aside, I love this series. The characters are fascinating, well drawn and some of them feel like I would be good friends with them if they were real. The pacing is brisk but not mind numbingly so. The action is nearly non-stop. The plotting and story line, while almost comic book like in spots, leaves you wanting more. I can easily see this becoming a very long running series.

Cathy says

I was worried if I'd be able to get into it because it had been years since I read the first book (my library never got this one and it was a long time before I was able to get it) but I didn't have a problem. I didn't remember much of the first book, but I was reminded of enough of the important factors to easily get into this one. What I do remember is that as much as I liked it, it was a little scattered. I think this one was better, more focused, the writing more mature.

Pither says

I was eager to start the second in the Skindancer series, as I really enjoyed the first one, Frost Moon. Dakota is a great protagonist, sharp and intriguing and well-written. I also wanted to see where Francis would take Cinnamon, Dakota's newly-adopted werecat daughter.

Blood Rock follows Dakota Frost, tattoo artists and magical skindancer, and her wide variety of friends through an alternate Atlanta. This time the city is beset by magical graffiti, and she's tasked with cleaning it up and the magical mess that follows.

Got to say though, Blood Rock was a big disappointment for me. I got about halfway through and wanted to put it down, but a dogged determination to see what would happen to the characters kept me going.

The action in Frost Moon was well-written, keeping your interest level high without bogging you down in the finer details of magic and science. Blood Rock though, you have to positively wade through. At several points I felt like I had to have a degree in physics or engineering just to know what they were talking about. The magic is explained through scientific terms, but if you're not quite sure how the scientific concepts work that Francis is using as comparison, you're out of luck.

The plot also felt kind of flat for me. Bad things kept happening to Dakota, one after the other after the other. I get that her life isn't sunshine and lollipops, especially with having to fight the magical graffiti, but often I had the reaction of "Oh NOW what?" At some points it felt like a whole range of plot points being strung along together without a lot connecting them.

Between the stodgy plot and difficulty of scientific concepts, Blood Rock was more work than pleasure for me. I'm not sure yet if I'll read the third, Liquid Fire; I'm reserving judgment.

Karissa says

This is the second book in the Dakota Frost series by Francis. It was an okay book, but there are definitely some flaws throughout the story. The third book in the series, Liquid Fire, was just released in May 2015.

I listened to this on audiobook and the narrator does a decent job. She does a good job with emotion and does okay with unique character voices. However there are a couple of male characters that sound very similar and are hard to distinguish between.

In this book Dakota is trying to track down the person making magical graffiti around the city. The magical graffiti is killing people (primarily vamps) and it looks like the whole city is pushing towards a larger disaster if the graffiti can't be stopped.

I didn't enjoy this book as much as the first book in the Dakota Frost series. This is an urban fantasy series about a magical tattoo artist named Dakota Frost who is also a skindancer (meaning she can make her tattoos come alive and attack/defend by dancing).

I do enjoy the concept behind these novels. However I felt like the plot was just kind of all over the place. On top of that one disastrous thing after another happens to Dakota to the point where you are just like "Oh my God, enough already!" I felt like Dakota's reactions to all these huge awful events was just so hollow.

Additionally there are a number of times in the story where Dakota makes mental leaps or deduces things that just don't make sense with the rest of the story. As a reader you are left thinking "Huh?"

Lastly there are a few times where Dakota is in a situation where she could use her magic but doesn't; these scenes don't make sense and seem to mainly just be there to push the plot in the right direction. At times I was almost screaming "Just use your stupid vines and block them already!"

The world is pretty typical urban fantasy fare (werekin, vampires, magic, and a heroine who runs herself ragged). However I was disappointed in some of the plot points. Especially the whole thing with Calaphase.

I do continue to enjoy the characters. I love the idea of skindancing and how that magic works; that part of the story is very unique and creative. I loved how much Dakota's foster child, Cinnamon, was in the story and really enjoyed watching Cinnamon change and grow throughout the story.

Overall this was an okay book, but pretty mediocre considering all of the other urban fantasy options out there. I continue to really love the creative tattoo magic and skindancing and loved that we learned more about that in this book. However at times the story is flawed and I thought that Dakota's reaction to all the disaster happening around her was kind of blah.

The world here is pretty typical urban fantasy fare. I guess I would recommend checking this series out if you are a huge urban fantasy fan and have read through most of the other urban fantasy out there. I have Liquid Fire for review but am debating as to whether or not I will actually read it.

new_user says

Law & Order meets tattoos and a turtle. That describes *Blood Rock's* character, speed, and style. Anthony Francis' second *Skindancer* novel follows Dakota Frost, magical tattoo artist as she adjusts to motherhood, recovers from trauma after *Frost Moon*, and tries to stop a homicidal graffiti artist from offing any more of her friends.

Magical tattoos and graffiti, vest coats, hair dye, and a little B&D-- Francis visualizes a fresh, colorful Atlanta subculture, the "Edgeworld," and he doesn't whitewash ATL either. Multicultural faces abound, though my favorite face belonged to vampire Calaphase, an emerging love interest. Who knew vampires could be so sweet?

Calaphase, adopted daughter Cinnamon, and Dakota's other relationships add necessary pathos to an

otherwise tedious investigation, i.e. **lengthy** conversations on the imaginary physics of magic. All the same, *Blood* could have bled more, drawn more from her audience if arson, murder, police pursuit, and separation from her daughter had affected Dakota more. We're due breakdowns. Though she faces chilling baddies - props to Francis; he writes villainy well- we didn't even get a glimpse into the doubts, trials, and exhaustion of Dakota's new motherhood until the end. Childless, single woman Dakota just slips into mothering a *teenager*?!

Instead, *Blood's* cast all convey a peevish, pedantic tone, posturing and lecturing even as a home burns before them rather than boo-hooing and suffering an emotional response as appropriate. "You fool! This is a magic fire! How are we gonna fight it now, if we can't see or even touch the magic mark that's generating the flames?" Dakota says. WAT. Who cares? I would have preferred some emotional arguments relevant to Life and Other Things instead of walking wedgies rattling on about the minutiae of fictional magic.

Apart from this obnoxious Nick Burns attitude, Francis leans too often on this ham-handed method of conveying important information to the reader, a device more suited to comic books and video games, where characters voice for the audience all their conclusions and carefully explain a protagonist's error. Also, expressions like "You fool!" belong in comic books, LOL.

In addition, characters shared too many similarities in voice, were-speak notwithstanding, and *Blood* was too long. Francis should definitely have deleted a few scenes and cut a few steps to the Big Reveal. The pieces in the piecemeal investigation were too small.

If the transparent, sometimes prissy dialogue improved, the magic physics were cut, emotion added, and the book shortened, *Blood Rock* would have improved by a lot. I don't like dropping series, but I'm not sure these problems are repairable. Three stars.

Sarah (Workaday Reads) says

Returning to this series was so easy. It only took a couple pages before I fully reconnected with the characters. They are so strong and unique that it is easy to remember even the little details about them.

I have a slight rant I have to get out of the way right off the bat. But I will try to keep in spoiler free... The person who dies? WHAT?! NO!!! It's cruel. Take it back! *sob* Okay, rant over.

I loved seeing Dakota in her new role as a mom. She makes such a strong protective figure that it is very believable to watch her kick butt all for Cinnamon's sake. The trials she has to go through getting and keeping custody are heartbreaking and very real. If anyone deserves to be a mom, it's her.

I only have one small issue with the book, and it isn't even the story. It's the cover. Hot looking biker chick, but who is she? It's definitely not Dakota. The model has not a single tattoo. Boo!

Overall, I loved this book. I can't wait to read the next. And there is supposedly a series in the works with Cinnamon as the main character? Sign me up. Anthony Francis is officially one of the few authors on my must-read list.

Shelleyrae at Book'd Out says

Having just finished Frost Moon I was happy to start Blood Rock on it's heels, which picks up the story just a few weeks later.

Blood Rock throws Dakota straight into a new magical crisis. This is a fast paced, action packed story that has Dakota frantically juggling murderous wall murals, a rebellious daughter, a pissed off Vampire Queen, a vampire lover, the Atlanta PD and her eccentric skindancer master.

Graffiti tags all over Atlanta are coming alive, trapping unwary humans, weres, and vampires including Revenance who is killed. Dakota is called in to consult by her uncle, since the tags seem to be using a magic similar to that used by tattoo artists, but she is out of her depth. The concept of magical graffiti is fabulous and the author has obviously put a lot of thought into it. I won't even pretend to understand the mathematical concepts Francis uses to explain how it works (mixed with a healthy dose of magic) but it all seemed to make sense to me. The authors descriptions are vivid so the story has a visual element (if you have the imagination.) I loved the whole storyline and the conclusion is spectacular.

There are several subplots in Blood Rock, mostly relating to Dakota's person life. Her adoption of Cinnamon is interrupted by the DA threatening to arrest her for murder and then she is forced to go on the run as the Atlanta PD suspect her of being involved in the graffiti murders. Lady Saffron has a tantrum, rescinding Dakota's protection after she begins to date Calaphase. Lord Transmania rears his head in the town where she learnt her craft and if that's not enough the magical graffiti artist targets Dakota and those she loves. Dakota barely gets to take a breath but Francis never lets the craziness get out of control, it all weaves together to simply create a superbly layered story.

With Blood Rock, Anthony Francis's Skindancer series becomes one of my favourites. I love the energy, attitude and creativity and look forward to the next installment.

Tracy says

~* 3.5 Stars *~

Just a Little Too Much

Dakota Frost may be the best magical tattooist in the Southeast (and she is - just ask her), but turns out that doesn't amount to much when you're struggling to get your kid into school. Sure, parents do that sort of thing all the time, but not many of their children have the same sort of special needs. Special needs befitting a weretiger with a full body tattoo, tail, and ears...and a mouth on her that would make a sailor on leave blush. And Dakota may be far left of center herself, but she's determined to get Cinnamon - the young street girl formerly called Stray who Frost is in the process of adopting - the schooling she needs. In some ways, at least according to Cinnamon, Dakota is positively square.

Dakota just considers it good parenting skills.

Before their appointment at the next school on the list, though, a chilling call comes in from a close family friend and pseudo uncle, also known as Atlanta PD's Detective Andre Rand. Normally all kinds of smooth, Rand sounds out of sorts and freaked out, and he urges Dakota to hurry across town and meet him at Oakland Cemetery. Even though both his tone and the request concern Dakota as she and Cinnamon hurry over there, nothing could have possibly prepared her for what she would see once she arrives: a friend, the vampire Revenance, slowly being crucified by the magical graffiti that is bursting from a wall in the cemetery, writhing and curling around him, pulling him apart with tendrils of malignant, magically-infused, spray painted topiary.

If being utterly helpless against a source of magic she's never seen before and watching a friend die ugly because of that helplessness wasn't enough, Dakota learns Rev's death isn't the only trouble. Vampires and weres have disappeared and the writhing, deadly graffiti is popping up all over Atlanta's Edgeworlder areas, those areas frequented by the magic practitioners or magical creatures of the city. After Revenance, it would

seem rather incontrovertible that those things are connected.

Denizens of Atlanta's magical community are under siege and Dakota may be the only one able to stop it, for while she hasn't the first clue about graffiti art, her tattoos are her power, and that combination of art and magic may be similar enough to help her stop whomever is responsible for the growing genocide before the city runs red - not from the graffiti art on the walls and buildings...but from the rivers of blood pouring through the streets.

~*~

It's been well over a year since I read the first book in the Skindancer series, Frost Moon. I normally try to reread early books in a series before reading newer releases, but time is tight right now so I decided to rely on the exposition in the narrative of Blood Rock to refresh my memory. That can often be hit-or-miss in books, but it worked out fine in this case. Francis reminds readers of important things from the previous book as it relates to the plot or characters in this one, and he does so in a natural, organic-to-the-story manner that would be enough to inform even new readers without overwhelming or bogging down the pace of the story. I appreciated that.

The first book made me a big fan of the world that Francis created for the series and characters who populate that world. I enjoyed revisiting them in this one. I like Dakota Frost quite a lot, she's smart but fallible and for all that she's great at what she does, she's not some all-powerful megawitch. There are consequences to her actions, limits to her power, and both the consequences and the limits can and often do exact a high price from her and her friends and loved ones. It's one of the most appealing aspects of the series for me...even if it doesn't always make for fun times around Little Five Points.

I'm loathe to seem gender-biased here, but there's a different feel - a slightly different tone - to urban fantasy featuring a female protagonist as written by a male author. I enjoy those nuanced differences on occasion. Of course, as there's only one other ongoing urban fantasy series I read that has the same male author/female protag situation, 'on occasion' is the most I could get anyway. Still, the differences are even more delineated with a female protagonist, and it seems to add more weight to the inherent differences in style across authors' gender lines. I enjoy it.

I can't say, though, that I enjoyed the whole of this book as much as its predecessor. I struggled with the story on a few different levels. The threat of the killer graffiti didn't really work for me for some reason. I couldn't relate to it and it seemed a less tangible threat than the one we see in the first book. And there were points in Dakota's investigation into the source of the graffiti and the core of its magic that I felt my mind wandering. Graffiti - however magically devilish - just seemed like a bunch of urban scrawl to me. The big reveal at the end about the perpetrator/s came out of nowhere and the conflict resolution that engendered seemed a little anti-climactic.

Oddly enough, one of my other issues is that nothing at all went right for Dakota in this book. That certainly can make for a rich and complex multi-layered plot, but in this book I actually got to a point where it felt like I couldn't turn a page without some other, possibly unrelated badness going splat all over her life. I found myself feeling a little depressed by it all on her behalf.

From what I've seen so far between the two books, Francis tends to pack his plots with a lot of action. That's not necessarily a bad thing, but in this case there's never really much room for a reader to catch a breath and very rarely any time to fully develop a scene's intended emotional impact before the narrative races along to the next calamity. That cheated the story out of the sort of expression of emotional response and consequence that would have served a couple of very significant plot points very well.. A tighter grip on the plot and a few less plot threads may have allowed for the remaining points to reach a more satisfying stage of development and resolution that was lacking.

I do truly enjoy the world and characters that Francis has created in this series, and there just can't be enough emphasis placed on how nice it is to get that slightly different flavor of writing from a male author. For me though, this book wasn't as entertaining as the first. Still action-packed, though, still conflict-laden, and it still...always...has Dakota Frost, the best magical tattooist in the Southeast. That's definitely enough to keep me looking out for the next book.

Disclosure: An ARC of this book was provided to me by Bell Bridge Books via NetGalley. This rating, review, and all included thoughts and comments are my own.

~*~*~*~

Reviewed for One Good Book Deserves Another.
