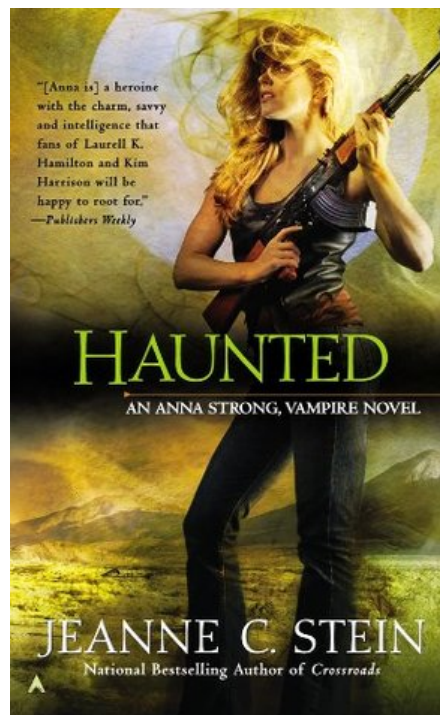




Haunted

Jeanne C. Stein

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Anna Strong—kick-ass bounty hunter and vampire—has made some enemies in her time. But it's not just her old foes she should be worried about...

Anna's shape-shifting friend Culebra finally opens up to her about his life before he owned Beso de la Muerte, a bar catering to supernatural clientele. As if summoned by the conversation, Culebra's past stumbles into his bar in the form of an old buddy cashing in a favor.

Soon Anna, Culebra and her ex, DEA agent Max, find themselves deep in Mexico, dealing with drug cartel infighting, old vendettas and missing girls. Mexico just may prove to be Anna's best match yet...

Haunted Details

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Author : Jeanne C. Stein

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From Reader Review Haunted for online ebook

Dina says

I think since she got involved again with the cat I like these books much more. I like the characters overall, I'm not sure how I feel about her ex still, William, well, I'm not sure what is up with that at all and I'm sure we'll find out. The odd thing about the William thing is his wife, I mean, it's not like she wasn't a part of his life. She totally turned slutty and dirty. Odd, very odd, don't you think he's care, just a little. Compared to the others which were around a 2.5 to 3 this is more towards a 4.

Sandra says

Others have done some amazing reviews of this one.

I just want to say, parents selling house in US, drug cartel business in Mexico, Culebra history, Max and an emotional upheaval, bye bye Stephen and Anna's response to children.

As this was the 2nd last in the series, I can now guess where its going, so some things had to be resolved.

However, I am sick of authors killing off characters. Happens all too often and I never forget which book and I never re-read that book if I was invested. Looking at you *ginikoch;ilonaandrews&nowjeannecstein*.

(Tori-Smexybooks) smexys_sidekick says

Originally posted at <http://smexybooks.com/2012/10/review-...>

Favorite Quote: "What am I?" I whisper then. "Vengeance."

Haunted, #8 in the Anna Strong Chronicles, brings back the dynamic action packed life of Anna Strong-bounty hunter turned vampire, that I missed in book 7. Anna was turned into a vampire through violent means and without her consent. While it has been a wild adventure for Anna, she has accepted her role in being the Chosen. She is content in her relationship with Stephan, a human reporter, but she can't help the loneliness that is beginning to claw at her. Being the Chosen and immortal, she is finding herself wanting something more; with someone who can truly understand her dual nature and the problems that comes with it. When her friend Culebra, a mysterious shape shifter, reveals his past to Anna, she is both shocked and repelled. Culebra is not who she thought. When his past comes to him for help, Anna and her ex boyfriend, DEA agent Max, will have to shove aside their animosity, travel with Culebra into Mexico and infiltrate the drug cartel to help him right an old wrong. But things are not as they seem and Anna soon learns that some things from the past will never let you go.

Anna is what every Urban Fantasy heroine should be. A tough, gutsy, complex character who delivers what's promised. She has a strong presence but doesn't overwhelm. Stein's conversational writing style is even flowing and fleshes out even the most minute details to provide a rich story telling experience. She has accepted her destiny as the Chosen and lives more in harmony with her vampiric side, but we see a stronger human urge for love, family, and security in here. Once I started reading, I was engrossed in Anna's story. The world Stein has created is a perfect blending of supernatural wonder and magic with modern times. I like

that Anna continues to learn from her earlier mistakes which allows for growth not only in her character but in this series. She still jumps the gun, but she isn't as self destructive anymore.

The majority of this story revolves around Culebra. We learn some things about him that contradicts what we have believed so far. Action, violence, and subterfuge are the main components and they are used to highlight and draw out both Culebra's and Anna's nurturing sides. We see Frey and his son, giving us hope that they will become more and more a permanent feature in future storylines. I liked the fact that even with multiple subplots, the main story line stays focused and reads fast and furious. Betrayal is a recurring factor that presents itself on many different levels. While some of the plot and it's main characters actions were predictable, it didn't take away from the over all enjoyment.

Many readers will be pleased to see that Haunted resolves some long standing storylines and opens new doors for Anna. One in particular that I have been waiting for a long time. What appeals to me in this series is it's plot driven storyline. Fast paced action and strong characters play a huge part while romance is subdued and used to accent the story rather than compete against it. This series is continuing arc so I do not recommend it as a stand alone. Even though the main conflict is resolved at the end of each installment, past scenes and relationships are often referenced and that will not make sense if you are not familiar with the players. I enjoyed this newest adventure into Anna's life and was pleased by the direction Ms. Stein is taking with the series.

Overall rating: B

Heather Book Savvy Babe says

The Anna Strong Chronicles continue strong with Haunted, the newest release in the urban fantasy series. While most of the main characters make appearances in Haunted, the majority of the book is based around Anna, Max, and Culebra. When Culebra's past catches up with him, Anna and Max determine to help their friend. Anna is shocked by Culebra's past and struggles to come to terms with the truth as well as moving past the hurts between her and Max. While Anna is involved in deadly dealings in Mexico, she also contemplates her relationship with her human boyfriend and the possibility of another.

I love how much Anna has grown throughout this series. With each book, she thinks through her choices better and she has become much less self-destructive. She still has a tendency to rush to judgement, and her communication skills are sadly lacking, but overall she has shown amazing growth. When series continue for so many books, the characters have to develop and grow, or the series falls flat. I find that I enjoy the Anna Strong series more and more and I will be sad to see it end in another book or 2.

Haunted is filled with action. There are some calm, contented times in the beginning for Anna as she visits with her family and then with Frey and his son. These calm times do not last long, once Anna hears Culebra's past, the pacing picks up and keeps up through the very end of the book. Culebra's past has ties to the Mexican drug cartels, and the fall out that shows up in this book is gritty, harsh, and dangerous. Anna utilizes her inner vampire quite a bit, and Culebra is highly involved in the action too. Despite tension between them, Anna, Max, and Culebra work well together. Because of the close quarters and time together, Anna and Max are able to sort through some of their hurts and issues and get some closure.

I really liked Haunted, I think that it is an excellent installment in the series, but it is not the happiest by far. There is a lot of darkness and sadness to this book with the twisted cartel drug lords, betrayals, and deaths. Even the ending, while appropriate and fitting for the story, it was a tear-jerker for me. I was not quite prepared for the ending, it is a bittersweet conclusion. While I am very pleased with where the story is going,

some of the threads and relationships end with sadness. However, when the heroine is a kick-butt, vigilante-esque vampire who attracts trouble, not every conclusion can be a happy one.

As I said, I am pleased with where the story is going and I am very excited to see what comes about in book 9. The series is drawing to a close that promises to be dramatic, thrilling, and even fulfilling. I have been a fan of this series from the beginning and I recommend it to readers who like urban fantasy and vampire reads.

Note on the Audio version Dina Pearlman is the narrator, and as always, she does a fantastic job. She has to use several different accents for various characters in this book, and she pulls it off. She conveys the tone of the setting and narrates the pacing well. If you enjoy listening to your books, the audio is very well done through this entire series.

Andrea says

This book is called haunted for several reasons that I'm not going to go into because I don't want to be a spoiler. I read this 300 page ebook in one afternoon -- it was that good. The books in this series combine just the right amount of action, with description and love story interest to keep the reader engaged. Anna's ex, Max, is back again and being a jerk like usual. I never understood why he had such a problem with her, but at least in this book he starts coming around to recognizing she's not such a bad person. I've always wished Anna would have told him the whole story of how she became a vampire, but that would have been more for her own vindication I guess. Frey, who has always been a favorite makes a guest appearance and throws her in a tailspin concerning her heart. I think her main problem is that she keeps ending up with men who treat her like an accessory instead of like the main attraction. I always feel like the men are with her for what she can do for them whether it be political or as eye candy. Anna can do better. The ending made me sad and happy all in one. I'm also glad we got more of a back story on her friend and fellow supernatural, Culebra.

Jessica (a GREAT read) says

Finished Jeanne C. Stein's Haunted this morning, having started it Friday morning. It was pretty good! Like with most of my reads lately, I couldn't recall a lot of what went down last time, but was able to get the general idea of it through the storytelling.

In this one Anna learns of her friend, Culebra's dark past and how it soon catches up with him when an old friend, Ramon, comes to him asking for help. In order to help him, he'll have to return to parts of Mexico where he left behind his old and dangerous life. Anna and Max come along as well to aid their friend, despite his seedy past.

Naturally, nothing is at is seems in Mexico. Big and bad things are going down and Anna, Max and Culebra find themselves involved, whether they wanted to or not, but considering the seriousness of the situation, they feel morally obligated to exact some justice!

This was a pretty fun and exciting read. I'll admit that the beginning was a touch slow. Although, I did like seeing Anna spend time with Frey and his son John-John. There's a few surprises there as well, but I won't get into it.

Anna's love life with Stephen, the reporter she is currently romantic with--and someone I have nearly no

memory of since it's been wayyy too many books since I've read the books in this series and when he was introduced--is going pretty well. But when she takes on this dangerous and sudden case, she kind of neglects him in the relationship sense. Worried it might put a barrier between them, but knowing nothing can be done about it, she goes on ahead with Max and Culebra anyway.

Like all Jeanne's books in this series, this one was filled with a lot kickass action! Anna is definitely one fierce heroine! She fights with a passion and purpose! She's very good at what she does, yet she does have weaknesses, which any hero or heroine has. And hers are her friends and family, in that she will do anything and everything to keep them safe, which is usually how she ends up in these situations.

Overall this was a fabulously fun read that was completely entertaining! Although I do miss seeing some of the other characters we've met, like David, but it seems fitting somewhat for Anna's connections to her human friends and family to be drifting as she progresses with her vampire life. For she will one day have to leave everything and everyone behind.

Jeanne totally blew me away with the ending though! It was definitely one of those earth-shocking, earth-shattering kind of endings that left me gasping! But there was still a nice turnabout at the very very end, like last line of the ending! I very much look forward to seeing how she wraps up this series this year!

The Anna Strong Chronicles is definitely a series I recommend to the Urban Fantasy reader, because Anna is pretty much the definition of Urban Fantasy heroine! She's tough, strong, kickass and knows how to take care of herself in every sense of the word! And yet, there are moments in between that we get to see the human side of her, to make her more endearing to us as the reader and I have come to love reading her adventures and trials! She's definitely come a long way for in her 18 months as a vampire that spawned 8 books!

Overall rating 5/5 stars

~Jessica~I'm a Hoodie Ninja~ says

This review was posted on Under The Covers

"His scream hangs in the air longer than it takes the blood to drain from his body. I watch the man die, feeling nothing, my mind a blank slate. That isn't entirely true. I do have a thought. One down...."

Yea, that's vampire and bounty hunter Anna Strong for you. She's a bad ass, no mercy kind of girl. And when her friend Culebra's Cartel past comes back to haunt him, Anna doesn't think twice about using her bad ass vampire and bounty hunter skills to help him. Even if it means she has to work with her hot DEA ex boyfriend, Max to get it done.

Now with the Mexican Cartel seeking revenge on Culebra as well as saving young girls from one perverted drug lord, Anna is faced with one of the toughest missions she has to endure, and the vampire in her is ready to get down and bloody.

Haunted is book eight in the Anna Strong Chronicles and while this series is about all about Anna, this book was more about Culebra. I felt like I was reading a script to an action movie. Every step she took was described just so that I could see and hear everything. And although we don't get to see much of her bounty

hunter day job here, you do get to see her skills on how she tracks her prey.

I do recommend reading these books in order. So if you want some kick ass vampire in your life, this series is just for you!

*ARC provided by publisher

Kt says

Review originally posted on my blog: A Book Obsession..

Since Anna was unwillingly turned into a vampire, there are very few people who know her true nature. Her shape-shifter friend, Culebra is one of the few trusted ones, so when his dark past is revealed, that shock hits her even harder. Yet when one of his past cohorts comes to call wanting to cash in a life debt Anna instantly steps up, along with Max, the DEA agent and her ex, to support Culebra on his quest. Traveling deep into Mexico, Anna could have never imagined the horrors she would experience, ones that spurn her vampiric need for justice to a righteous fury. Like they say about a woman scorned, adding a vampire to the mix, and her opponents don't stand a chance.

I was utterly shocked at learning Culebra's past misdeeds. Considering how open he is now to everyone in need, by running the bar and the safe house nature it supplies, I just cannot believe he was ever so terrible. Just like Anna, it blew the wind out of my sails a good bit. Of course that shock didn't last very long for either of us as Anna realized that Culebra may very well be in trouble from that dark past. I think it shows a true testament to their strength in their friendship that stubborn Anna was able to get over such a shocker to her morals so fast. It also shows her fierce loyalty to those she calls her own, and I feel that despite his lesser moral past, Culebra is more than worthy of her support now.

Anna's love life is an utter tangled mess in Haunted. She's currently dating a human who accepts all of her, and doesn't shy away from her nature. Even though she is fond of him and he does make her happy, part of her isn't satisfied. Then there is the brief return of Frey and his son, which opens up all sorts of questions for Anna. In fact it shows her the life that she wants, a real family, but thought she could never have since she was turned into a vampire. Speaking of that turning, Anna is also mixed up in a mission with Max, the human who dumped her after finding out her true nature. Despite his terrible demeanor towards him and his nonacceptance, She'll always has a soft spot for him and there is a wistfulness there as she wishes he had been able to understand. So, needless to say, when it came to love, Anna was rather confused in Haunted. I have to admit that I have my preferences out of who I would pick from the three men, and I'm so happy that it looks like by the end, Anna will be heading in that direction. (I was purposely vague on that last statement to keep from spoiling the ending.)

I have to admit that most of the time I don't read the acknowledgements in books, but skip right to the "good stuff." However, this time around I'm very glad that I didn't follow that normal pattern, as Jeanne talked about writing this story because of the real issues below our borders and she wanted to give some sort of resolution, even if it was only a fictitious one. I've just always enjoyed stories that employ a deeper story or connection to the writer, as the emotion always seems to come across all the more strongly for it. All in all, I really enjoyed this latest installment in the Anna Strong series. It really amazes me just how much all of the characters have grown over the series, and I know I will be terribly sad to say goodbye to them in the next installment as it will be the last. Fans of the series won't be disappointed in Haunted as it is an action packed ride featuring an issue that is near and dear to the author's heart, making for an incredible read.

Judith m cox says

5 Stars

Usually I don't read vampire stories. This was a very enjoyable book. Now I'll ave to go back and start other series. Well written.

Steph says

In **Haunted**, Anna learns about Culebra's past and how he and Max met. Culebra has been an intriguing character throughout the series and it was nice to learn who he was and what he did before owning Beso de la Muerte, a bar in a cave in Mexico.

Feeling lonely on Christmas Eve, Anna heads to her favorite Mexican hangout. There she finds Culebra and Max knocking back drinks at the bar. When someone from Culebra's turns up seeking help, he cannot refuse. He believes he's repaying a debt, but his "friend" has something very different in mind. Thankfully, Max and Anna tag along.

This story is quite different from the previous books in the series. The storyline offers readers a mix of real-life cartel nightmares* and urban-fantasy style payback. If only the people suffering in Mexico (and other countries around the world) had vampires and shapeshifters to save the day.

*{*Drugs, guns and sex slave ring involvement. Kidnapping and rape take place, however no detailed descriptions of the rape exist.}*

With this type of storyline, it's easy to understand why this book didn't focus mainly on Anna. I really enjoyed getting to know Culebra a bit better and more interaction with Max, Anna's ex-beau and DEA agent. But, I'm anxious to see what happens in book 9 now that she seems to have made a big relationship decision.

Up until the last 3/4 of the book, I would've rated this a solid 3-★, but had to bump it up following an emotional scene.

I recommend this series be read in order:

Bonnie Ramthun says

Haunted is a powerful, compelling story of drug cartels, human trafficking, gun running along the Mexican border, and did I mention the vampire? Or the shape shifter? Anna Strong, bounty hunter and vampire, fulfills every revenge fantasy you've ever had against the evil predators who traffic in young girls. Anna doesn't mean to get caught up in the drug cartel operations along the Mexican border, but once she gets involved she doesn't back down. Jeanne C. Stein is a writer with a great command of language and when she puts together an action scene you can smell the smoke, feel the impacts of the gunshots, and taste the blood. You can read this novel as a standalone, because you'll find out everything about Anna Strong that you need

to know and you'll like this woman a lot. For those of us who've read the series, this is a thrill ride with our favorite vampire heroine who allows her supernatural abilities free rein to save innocent girls and take down some very evil bad guys. An excellent novel. I highly recommend it.

Sarah says

This was a good book. Be warned that there is a child rape scene, child killing and child trafficking. However...the bad guys pay the price!!!!

Darcy says

I really liked this one, it seemed like Anna really went through a big range of emotions. Anna wasn't the funniest person at the start. I didn't really like seeing her wallow in self pity, not a good look for her. I loved that she was surprised by those that cared about her. Her visit by Frey and John-John made me smile. I liked the frank discussion that Frey had with her, I really wanted that for her, but was scared that she would screw it up and not let herself be happy.

I hated how things started with Cuelabra. They are friends, he has more than proved that Anna can depend on her. So when she was judgmental about his past I wanted to slap her, his actions then are not the man he is today. I was glad that eventually she was able to get past that, that she could trust him again. By the end of the book it seems they are at a better spot than where they started.

Through the trouble I think Anna learned a lot about herself and her vampire. At first I thought it was odd how she keeps referring to that part of her nature as a separate being, but as the series goes on I get it. She needs that separation to be ok with what she has become. The vampire can do the bad things that she has always wanted to do, but couldn't, the vampire can be the bad person. I think as more people learn about her being a vampire and can accept her, this won't be an issue anymore. Anna was able to use being a vampire as a strength to help people this time around, even had people ask her to bring the vampire out to do the damage. She even had people look to her while all the bad things were happening and after all was done, there were still people looking up to her.

The ending with Max was bittersweet. I liked Max at the start of the series, but when he got pissy and judgmental about her becoming a vampire I was done with him. He kept showing up and all it did was make Anna feel bad about herself. Even in this book he couldn't help himself and kept poking at Anna. With that being said, I didn't want things to end the way they did. I was glad that Max was able to have his say.

I loved Anna's choice at the end, think it is perfect for her and will help keep her grounded, remind her what being the Chosen means and how she can do good with that. I can't wait for the next book!

Kathy Davie says

Eighth in the Anna Strong urban fantasy series revolving around Anna, a bounty hunter-turned-vampire in San Diego.

My Take

I loved it and I hated it. Anna is strong and does the right thing on the big, general moral issues. As a fictional character, she gets to be bad on the bad guys. On a more personal level, she does some stupid things that I can't decide if she's simply acting without thinking or if Stein figures this is an easy way out.

I also had my worries that this might be the end of the series. Fortunately there are still some big issues in Anna's life that haven't been settled...and book 9 is due out in 2013! Whew.

I've always loved strong female characters and that is certainly Anna. Yeah, she has her stupid moments, but on the whole she's a good person. I could wish there were more like her in real life. Vampire and all! I like what Stein does with the vampire genre as a whole. It's different with a somewhat real set to it. Somewhat, because she does not embrace anything close to a traditional career choice, but Stein includes all sorts of human problems. Celebrating holidays. Having friends. Experiencing human angst about boyfriends, friends, and family.

There are lots of changes with the important men in Anna's life. Her father's (and the family's) decision. Stephen's new opportunity. Max's change. Frey's hope.

Where does Max get off judging what Anna tells Stephen? It's not like it's a good idea to tell him she's off to Mexico to take down a drug dealer...! Although, she should have given him a general idea of what she was doing.

Considering how prevalent bribery is, why does Max simply trust that there won't be an ambush at the airport?

Stein: Might want to fix that slip at the start of Chapter 52. Since Ramon is dead, I'm assuming you meant to slide Luis' name in there...

The Story

It's Christmas Eve and Anna is feeling sorry for herself. Sure, there are parties she could go to, but it's just too much effort to fake being human. Instead, she heads to the one place where she can be herself. Beso de la Muerte.

It's a chance encounter in the desert that sets off events in *Haunted* when Anna rescues Ramon. He's in trouble and his family is threatened. He needs Culebra's help. And Culebra owes him.

Seems, though, that Culebra doesn't owe him what either of them expected. And the side action that Luis Santiago has going simply ensures that Anna will take him down.

But is it worth all the loss that occurs?

The Characters

Anna Strong is a bounty hunter in partnership with David, an ex-football player. She had been with Max, a DEA agent, until she was forcibly turned into a vampire and he dumped her. Now, Stephen Powers, a reporter, is in her life as a result of events in *Hexed: Blood Debt*. **Trish** is the young girl Anna had thought was her dead brother's daughter; she now lives with Anna's parents who still believe she is their granddaughter.

Culebra is a shapeshifter who runs a blood bar for supernaturals, Beso de la Muerte, just over the border. He's helped Anna out so many times; he's also helped Max with intel. And we learn a major part of his back history. *I think Anna is much too self-righteous in her judgment.*

Daniel Frey is a shapeshifter, an English teacher, and entrusted with a tremendous legacy. **John-John** is Daniel's young son whom Anna helped in *Crossroads* even as **Sani**, the Dine shaman, helped her.

Ramon was one of Culebra's *hermanos* from his time with Santiago. **Maria**, his wife, and **Gabriella** is their daughter. All that is left of his family. Rójan is a bully at the school where Ramon's son attended. **Pablo Santiago** leads this particular drug gang and he's keeping low while the heat is on. **Luis Santiago** is *El Jefe*, Pablo's brother. He's keeping the Santiago drug customers satisfied even as he ensures his own satisfaction.

Adelita is one of the young girls Luis has had kidnapped for him to use as he pleases. She is also the one who will be the most satisfied. **Esmeralda**, **Francisca**, **Peppi**, and **Dorotea** are others.

The Cover

The cover is a range of yellows from the bright yellow sparkle on the waves?? and mellowing into softer yellows in the sky into a hint of orange in Anna's long blonde hair blowing in the breeze to the more orange tones in the sky just over the mountains on the left. On the right side of the black-clad Anna in her leather tank top and jeans are a brief respite of greens in the mountains and the grassy plain. Anna is serious, begrimed, and in a protective stance holding a rifle.

The title applies to our three main protagonists, each with their own *Haunted* memories.

Ken Liljengren says

Thank You Ms. Stein

Ken
