



Who's Afraid?

Maria Lewis

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Incredibly exciting new voice in paranormal fiction.

This is the story of Tommi, a young Scottish woman living an ordinary life, who stumbles violently into her birthright as the world's most powerful werewolf. The sudden appearance of a dark, mysterious (and very attractive) guardian further confuses her as her powers begin to develop and she begins to understand that her life can never be the same again. The reader will be swept up in Tommi's journey as she's thrown into the middle of a centuries-old battle and a world peopled with expert warriors and vicious enemies - this is the start of a series - and a world - you will fall in love with.

Who's Afraid? Details

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Author : Maria Lewis

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From Reader Review Who's Afraid? for online ebook

Sarah says

It's no secret that urban fantasy is one of my go to genres and I'm always excited to discover new books to cram on my overflowing shelves. **Who's Afraid?** is a debut novel by Australian author **Maria Lewis** and although it's an interesting start to a new series I did have a few issues with it.

When Tommi's mother dies she decides to travel to New Zealand to track down the father she never met but what she discovers when she meets the Maori side of her family will change her life forever. Tommi had no idea that her father was a werewolf from a powerful and dangerous family and now her life is at risk so she needs to learn how to defend herself and she needs to do it fast.

I have really mixed feelings about Tommi, she has a great group of friends and when she's around them she can be a really fun character but there were times when I just thought she was incredibly nasty. She can be very mean about people she's never met and I'm just so sick of reading about characters who think that the only way to prove they're strong and independent is to hate on other women. Why is it mainly female authors that write about women knocking each other down? Do characters have to make nasty comments on other women's looks and clothes just because those women are interested in dating their friends? It's not just women that Tommi is down on though, she makes rude remarks about artists she works with too and it just makes her look jealous and petty. I think the author has just tried too hard to make Tommi "cool" and in the end her attitude has made her pretty dislikable. Tommi does improve towards the second half of the book but I need those changes to be consistent for me to want to carry on much further with this series.

I liked the way the werewolves change is portrayed, it's painful and confusing and the first time it happened to Tommi was incredibly well written. You are right there with her feeling shocked and terrified about what is happening to her and I thought it was cleverly done. I also liked the mentoring system and the way Tommi had Lorcan around for backup and assistance when she needed him. He's an intriguing character and I think I'm actually more interested in him than I am in Tommi at the moment. I also thought that some things came a little too easy for Tommi, she is a brand new werewolf yet she manages to master some powerful abilities that would usually take years to learn so that was a bit unrealistic.

I think my biggest issue was with the portrayal of her Maori family though, I'm all for books with diverse characters and that should have been a huge selling point for **Who's Afraid?** but it's completely negated by the fact that every Maori character is a bad guy. The whole Maori pack is apparently evil and the way they treated Tommi certainly holds true on that but I don't like the way an entire minority group has been portrayed. I find it offensive and quite frankly a little racist.

If I'm honest I'm not sure if I'll end up continuing this series, there is potential there but it doesn't hold a candle to authors like Patricia Briggs and Ilona Andrews. It is only a debut though so I kind of feel like I should give **Maria Lewis** one more book to show me what she's really capable of. I guess I may try the sequel at some point but I'm certainly not going to be rushing out to preorder it.

Source: Received from publisher via NetGalley in exchange for an honest review

Ryan Buckby says

actual rating: 4.5

i LOVED this book it's my first book with a heavy urban fantasy feel to it and i enjoyed it not knowing what to expect. I don't read that much urban fantasy so it was a bit out of my comfort zone but nonetheless it was a very fast and action packed read.

Tommi is a seemingly normal young woman living in Scotland with her mother until one day her mother dies and she then begins her journey half way across the world to New Zealand to track down her father and discovers her truth heritage. I don't go much on werewolf stories but this story for me felt different and original because it felt like it had the history that felt real enough that it could be real. I loved how Maria incorporated family, history, action packed and werewolves into one story and it was done better then i expected.

The journey that Tommi goes through with learning about her families true identity to trying to control and learn about her own powers. She also has to make tough decisions that could only get her killed but also her family and friends.

I cannot wait for book number two that will becoming out next year but i honestly want the next book now.

Emmeline (The Book Herald) says

I kindly received this ARC from Hachette Australia, Piatkus via NG in return for an honest review.

"It took me a second to realise that I wasn't screaming at all. Following me down into the unknown was a piercing howl."

Alright ladies and gents, let's hop straight into the plot!

*Tommi Grayson is 22 years old, living in Dundee- Scotland,
a passionate curator and artist, an eccentric blue haired gal, mourning the loss of her mother.
Tommi decides that the only way she'll cope is if she finds her father,
not that she wants to meet him and have a reunion.
she wants to meet the rapist that helped bring her into this world.
Going to New Zealand to find those Maori long-buried roots,
she stumbles into something that will forever change her life- the Ihi pack.
She's abducted, tortured and almost raped.
But the worst thing is- on a moonlit night, fur and howls overtake her life.*

This book was awesome! No joke!

Bravo Maria Lewis! *claps*

This book is a fantastic start to a new urban fantasy series, it had great characters (and seriously creepy ones), it had intrigue, love/ romance, gore and mystery.

Also the characters were beautifully fleshed out, I loved Tommi's character! I'm still a little confused on the insistence of blue hair, but heck, who am I to cramp her style? Tommi is a really likable character, she can have a few *facepalm* moments but she is determined to bring out the best of the worst situations.

Now Lorcan MacCarthy is a stud muffin! I really liked his character, he complemented Tommi's eccentric

persona with his warrior- calm demeanor. He is H.A.N.D.S.O.M.E (it needed to be spelt out for emphasis) plus the dude fights with a sword, i mean come on, do you need anything else?
But seriously, he did come across as a bit too saintly at times, but i like him!

The world-building in this was really well thought out- the praetorian guard, the Askari, The Treize, etc... at times i did feel a bit overwhelmed with piecing and remembering exactly who was who, but the author does a great job at explaining and once you get it, it's easy peasy.

Also, I have a soft spot for where Tommi went when she was in New Zealand! I stayed in Rotorua for 3 months and traveled all over new zealand so reading a book on that location made me smile!

Lewis writes really well! She fully engages and draws you into her story and won't let go until the book ends.

WARNING- Mature content and language, an almost rape scene, and plenty of blood and gore.

I really like the plot twist, but that ending caught me totally aback. I'm definitely curious to see where book 2 will be going!

Give it a go guys!

Stay Awesome my lovelies!

-The Book Herald

Check out my blog- The Book Herald Blog (Help the little people!)

tweet me @thebookherald

MichelleG says

"Who's Afraid?" By Maria Lewis is the story of Tommi Grayson. A 22 year old muay-tai loving, blue haired bombshell who after the death of her mother travels from Scotland to New Zealand in the hopes of tracking down her estranged father.

What she finds is something else altogether. Although her father died only weeks before she arrives in New Zealand, she meets the rest of her extended and slightly crazy family... And learns a whole lot more than she bargained for. After meeting her new "family". Tommi is kidnapped, beaten, forcibly restrained and almost raped before escaping and literally fighting for her life.

Tommi is brash, brazen, tough as nails, stunningly beautiful and absolutely fantastic with her blue hair, love of life and big heart you just want to love Tommi, shake her and hug her all at once.

Tommi has a hard time of it through this book, and it's obviously written with a second or possibly third book in kind, but that in my opinion only heightens my love of this book because I can't wait to find out what happens.

Lynette Noni says

Bad friend admission: I've been buds with the author of *Who's Afraid*, Maria Lewis, for nearly a year now, and I only just managed to carve out a chunk of time to read her wolfy debut.

Good friend admission: I absolutely LOVED it. I read it in one sitting and then contacted her at 1am once I was finished with a plethora of HOW COULD YOU, YOU HORRIBLE HUMAN BEING messages.

I will admit, I was apprehensive going into this book. I've read my fair share of supernatural books starring werewolves and I feared there would be nothing unique about this to set it apart. And since, as previously mentioned, Maria is a friend of mine, I was fully prepared to skim through the book and, if ever asked, say, "Of course I read it! Great job!" and then hurry the conversation along before I was asked for details.

But the truth is, Maria created a cast of characters who battled their way into my heart (sometimes literally—Hello, Lorcan! *insert heart eyes here*). From the protagonist who, it must be said, I WAS SO GLAD SHE HAD A SMART HEAD ON HER SHOULDERS (aside from that momentary lapse of judgement at the end), to the roommate-slash-bestie and then the other bestie who might as well have been a roommate and... gah! I could go on and on! Even the creepy bad dude is so well fleshed out that you feel actual heebie-jeebies whenever he's mentioned. And, worth stating a second time, LORCAN. (*happy sigh*)

Plus even minor characters like Wil, the self-obsessed artist, and Sue, the supernatural doctor, who may not have had much screen time, still managed to leave a lasting impression.

One of the main things I value in a book, *especially* a debut, is how developed the characters are. It's a mark of a truly talented author when they can make their readers connect on some level to even the most unlikely of characters. (I legit have *nothing* in common with the protagonist, yet I'm certain if we sat on a plane beside each other, we'd come out the other end as best friends. I'd only understand half of her pop culture references, but the other half would solidify our BFF-status for life!)

All in all, a fabulous, entertaining, heartbreaking, and overall kick-butt novel. I couldn't be prouder of this amazing author who I'm certain is going places and I'm so honoured that I'll get to watch and cheer along from the sidelines.

Deborah Ideiosepius says

This exuberant paranormal story covers Tommi, a young woman living in Scotland who, upon her mothers death, decides to return to the country of her conception, New Zealand, to search for her unknown father. Now Tommi knows there are unlikely to be warm and fuzzy reunions at hand; her mother told her she was a product of rape and she does not really know anything about her father, even the name is a guess.... Little could she predict (though we, the readers, have more than an inkling) that while not warm, there is a fuzzy element to her adventure as she learns that through her father, she is a werewolf.

No spoilers so far, the blurb on the back will tell you that. But what the blurb may not convey is the vibrancy and charm of the main character and her life. The story is told with an exuberance that makes the journey of a young woman discovering a paranormal link entirely new and exciting. And for me at least, probably many people who pick up this book, it is a theme that has been read a lot, so the freshness of the story is a tribute to

the characters and the way the author develops them.

The use of Scotland and New Zealand as settings made the story feel real to me. I liked the realism of Tommi and her circle of friends, and I mostly liked the evolving tension between Tommi and her mentor, though occasionally I felt he was a touch underdeveloped and stereotypical. At times I loved the way we were introduced to the supernatural world: We were not given immersion, too many meaningless names, too many characters to identify or many of the other pitfalls I have encountered in other paranormal books setting up a series. At other times I felt a bit blasé about the world-building: I have read a *lot* of paranormal, and at times I could not avoid the 'ho hum, here we go again, learning another one' feeling and I am not sure of that was just me, or that the story loses a little momentum in establishing the world.

A personal quibble of mine is books that make it clear you need to read the next one. I know, I know, lost cause, but I like books that stand alone and do not lean on past or future books. This book is definitely a #1, it is not really a stand alone book because, while one story arc ends the next begins before the final cover and the overall arc is clearly to be continued. I did like it enough that this did not bother me and that I will get the next one, probably pretty soon.

On the whole, great book which I do recommend to anyone who likes the paranormal.

Tash says

Reviewed @ Confessions From Romaholics

Review copy kindly provided by publisher in exchange for a honest review

You know when you have a winner and you think okay I will hold off reading it until the last minute possible as you want to savour it and take time to write a review that will be in depth and all sorts of wonderful....

Instead you are getting this because let's face it, I'm a massive fan of shifter stories and the fact that is set in my home country was added bonus as it was about time I read a romance set in the beautiful country.

Well the book was good once it got going but I devoured it and stayed up into the wee hours of the morning. As once I discovered this was set in Rotoura

Consider me a fangirl of the highest order.

This isn't just a run of the mill paranormal/fantasy with your twist and turns. There is plenty of culture and I don't mean Scottish culture or New Zealand culture and the author has done her research. You are not just taken to those countries, you are immersed in the dialogue. and top it all off there is Tommi. A 22 year old blue haired art curator who got a hell of a story to tell .

Tommi Greyson wants to know one thing, who is her father. However out of respect to her mother she has put off until her mother died. Now struggling with the grief, she hopes that a simple trip to her birth country will give her the answers she seeks. She doesn't want a relationship with him, her friends and grandparents are her family. Just a name to a face and a chance to see the man who set the course that led to journey that her life has been until now.

It seems a simple story, however Lewis is only warming up, and soon the book takes a darker turn when she discovers the truth about her father and his family. It is no ordinary secret that has been kept from her.

They are werewolves and she is one of them .

With the pace and story picking up, Tommi's life is thrown into turmoil as her NZ family aren't exactly please to see her considering her mother actions in the past. However she is blood and they need her. As the Ihi family are no ordinary pack and they need her whether she likes it or not .

In those very moments, the basis hopefully for this series is formed as Tommi's life is changed for better or worse and there is little that she can do. Except run back to Scotland but she isn't the same girl as before. Armed with a guardian and one big target on her back , Tommi is about to face a new reality she never ever expected.

Is she prepared?

Well you have to read and see as that as far I'm going. There is so much in this book , rich content that you will enjoy and keep you turning the pages.

Who's Afraid, definitely lives up to the genre and has plenty of action and more to keep the readers entertained. Lewis doesn't hold back once she finds her stride and Tommi is perfect character that will appeal to a wide range of people. She is the modern young adult who happens to get entangled in a mess that changes everything she ever knew. I had slight doubts but once I was really stuck in and connected to Tommi. It was magical hence my slightly gushing review.

I do hope there is more. This one of the most refreshing urban fantasies/ paranormals that I have read in a very long time. It has revitalise the genre for me and made excited to see what else is out there. If you love your new adult and looking to read something different, this is the book you need to read.

For more of my reviews, visit [Confessions From Romaholics](#). And drop by the blog's Facebook page

Kathryn says

A new urban fantasy series begins with Who's Afraid, and it's not quite like any other urban fantasy I have read to date. Tommi is a smart, sassy young woman in her early twenties who is on her way to being a very powerful werewolf. Not that she knows that as she leaves her home of Scotland for a visit to New Zealand, where she hopes to meet the father she has never known. However once she arrives there and visits a small settlement outside Rotorua she finds far more than she bargains for. That's where she comes face to face with her heritage, and its tough.

Returning to Scotland under the care of Lorcan, a somewhat mysterious carer and saviour, she returns to her apartment. It turns out Lorcan has been sent by the powers that be to counsel and guide her through the transition of becoming what might be a very powerful female werewolf. As she trains, an attraction builds between herself and Lorcan, but can it go anywhere and who is Lorcan? What else must Tommi face?

The world building takes place gradually, the reader learns along with Tommi what it is all about. It is all nested in the ordinary every day life of Tommi and her friends. As Tommi narrates the story I not only came to invest in her but her friends as well. Will they ever know what she really is? Can she continue to exist in the world she has known up until this?

There is definite danger, someone is out to attack Tommi if they can and you know for sure they will. Yet this book is more about Tommi finding herself, who she is, what she can do. How her life is changing. She often astounds Lorcan with her abilities, what might have been expected to take months, Tommi achieves quickly. As the story moves along I just can't help but really like Tommi with her blue hair and quick thinking tongue.

There was just one part of the story I hated! It's dark! But then again I don't think Tommi liked it either.

I really liked Lorcan too, he is an ex Praetorium Guard (a warrior) and now he is a custodian. He has been sent by the Treize - the rulers to be a guide to Tommi in her new life. He is so human but so other as well. And there is beautiful attraction between himself and Tommi.

Enough let the author herself explain a little about this book. She's every bit as wonderful as her Tommi! Who's Afraid has been released in Australia and New Zealand and will be out worldwide in July.

Annie says

What an epic urban fantasy!!! In a world of Paranormal Practitioners and Askari-the nerds of the outfit (my favourite lines of the book) comes a story about Tommi who travels to the other side of the world for information on her estranged father, only to find that her heritage is not what she thought it to be.. A carefully plotted story with creative world building and whitty dialogue, this story brings Maori culture and fantasy together.. This is a gripping story that leaves you gobsnacked on the edge of your seat!!!

ALPHAreader says

'Who's Afraid?' is the debut urban fantasy novel from Australian author, Maria Lewis.

Holy guacamole, Wolverine – I loved this book. I loved it from that clever title (echoes of *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* Gettit?!) right to the last page that sent me on a frantic internet search to see when a sequel would be coming (Who's Afraid Too? – no release date yet, but I'm already salivating at the very notion!). I loved this book so much that I'm actually reviewing this after re-reading it ... because it came out in January, but it's taken me this long to really collect my thoughts and direct my enthusiasm into a halfway coherent review.

First and foremost – there was always a high chance I would love this book because werewolf stories are kinda my bag, baby. I mean – Alpha Reader is an ode to the werewolf stories that sparked my love of all things urban fantasy and paranormal romance way back when... which also means I have a pretty high-standard when it comes to my werewolf books: Patricia Briggs, Anne Bishop, Kelley Armstrong, and Charlaine Harris are the pinnacles of my werewolfish love and I'm here to tell you – Maria Lewis is now up there with them.

What made this book even better for me was getting to read the werewolf legend in a New Zealand setting – a departure from the typical North America of modernised urban fantasy, or its European gothic origins. Lewis actually ties heroine – Tommi Grayson's – discovery of her werewolf origins to the discovery of her estranged Maori father, which had smart echoes of Mercy Thompson's Native American shapeshifter origins for me. But Tommi hasn't just discovered she's a werewolf, she's also discovered a family she never knew

she had – a highly dysfunctional and dangerous family (and that's before they grow teeth and claws!) The family element makes for a tight twist on what's almost a coming-of-age narrative, adding a layer of psychological warfare to the werewolf origin story.

While an important chunk of the story takes place in New Zealand (and I look forward to how Maori elements present in future instalments) Tommi actually lives in Scotland, and manages to escape home – largely thanks to a mysterious guardian looking out for Tommi, a man named Lorcan. If I had any complaints about this book they're minimal and understandable – this being the first in a series (a series that has real longevity, I can already read) means there are times when world-building comes close to info-dumping, often communicated through Lorcan's character. But this is urban fantasy and I'm always pretty lenient for the sake of learning about this new world – especially when it's a world as intriguing as the one Lewis has created.

Look, going into this book you should know that Lewis knows her stuff – she's a bit of a paranormal, pop-culture connoisseur (and you should definitely follow her on Twitter btw) and she totally delivers the type of book I can only assume she herself wanted to read. The werewolf element is complex and horror-filled, there's romance set to simmer and a gutsy, flawed heroine you'll definitely want to follow into sequel ...

One of the most anticipated urban fantasies of recent years, Maria Lewis' 'Who's Afraid' and heroine Tommi absolutely live up to the hype. New Zealand werewolves, complicated family history, romance, danger and a new paranormal world to fall in love with. It's 'Underworld' meets 'Animal Kingdom', in a taut psychological family drama, made all the more intense and captivating for the fact that this family has more than metaphorical claws and teeth.

Ian says

When Tommi travels to New Zealand to find her father she discovers two things. Her father is dead and she is a werewolf. And not just any werewolf, she is an alpha descended from the most powerful line of werewolves.

After being attacked by one of the local pack members she flees New Zealand and returns to her home in Scotland. But before long it becomes apparent that some of her problems have followed her home, a werewolf from New Zealand is stalking her and murdering the locals.

Who's Afraid? is a little more than your typical werewolf story. It avoids the well trod path that these books often follow, and what could have been a fairly average story actually ends up being great.

It's not perfect. I don't think this story really needed to be international and it might have benefitted from being set entirely in New Zealand (or Scotland). But I'll forgive a lot in a debut and honestly Tommi is such a great heroine, she's the heroine that other heroines should aspire to be. She's a kick ass confident woman who doesn't need saving by anyone.

Many thanks the Hachette Australia and Netgalley for providing me with this ARC

Claire says

Fast paced and full of adventure. Tommi is such a fantastic character, and she's so fleshed out that you can

see every aspect of her (including her flaws) and understand why she makes every decision. Such a page turner! I struggled to put this book down.

Roslyn says

3.5

I received a free copy of this book from Hachette Australia via Netgalley.

Who's Afraid? sits firmly within the paranormal sub-genre and in any ways uses its usual tropes but it contains some original angles on well-worn themes that make it of particular interest.

There are mild spoilers ahead, but I'll only tag one bit of it as a specific spoiler as most of what I'm going to cover is already described in the book's blurb.

Warning: there is quite a lot of violence and a scene of near-rape in the novel, (view spoiler)

Tommi, a young Scottish woman with unknown paternity, travels to New Zealand and discovers she isn't who she thinks she is. She is not only a werewolf, but the member of one of the most powerful werewolf families in the world. There's nothing particularly original about this in itself, but aspects of the story placed this a cut above most paranormal novels of this type.

For a start, the werewolf transformation itself, far from being glossed over as it is in some novels, is described with a vivid physicality. There's nothing magical about it; it's devastatingly painful and awful. Tommi herself is an interesting character, one who, like many female paranormal protagonists, turns out to be 'special' and very talented, but comes across as very human just the same. What I particularly liked about Tommi is that she's not merely 'kiss-ass' as most paranormal female protagonists are; she's genuinely self-sufficient and tender at the same time.

I really enjoyed not only the gritty portrayal of werewolf transformation but the supernatural world the novel sets up, including the system of guardianship, which makes it necessary for Tommi to have someone to introduce her into this world and help her adapt to her werewolf self.

(view spoiler)

One aspect of the novel that puzzled me was the setting. Most of the novel takes place in Dundee in Scotland. The author at times does use local colloquialisms in characters' conversations and these do create a sense of place to some extent. Not being Scottish, I'm not able to say if the speech patterns and dialogues are true to Scottish English or not. But as an Aussie, I *can* say that to me, the speech patterns and 'feel' of the characters feel Australian. Tommi herself especially feels and sounds like an Aussie to me. That should be a good thing – I enjoy reading books by Australian writers that feel Australian – but then why the Scottish setting? It felt out of sync to me somehow, with the result that the sense of place didn't feel quite solid to me (except when Tommi visits New Zealand early in the novel).

I did find the writing somewhat uneven. It's generally vivid and flowing and engaging but at times the prose is really rather rough. I realise that some roughness, including typos, is to be expected in an ARC, but the many grammatical mistakes and sentences badly in need of editing did interfere in my reading experience to some extent. And in some parts of the the ebook I was sent the formatting was faulty and very difficult to

read.

Despite these reservations, I did enjoy the book and am looking forward to the next book in the series.

Carol - Reading Writing and Riesling says

My View:

For those who like their drama with a huge dollop of supernatural, full moon transformations, blood thirsty revenge scenes mingled with romance, this very adult paranormal is for you!

Maria Lewis has created a very confident, independent and as of the last full moon, very were wolf, female super hero called Tommi; blue haired, tattooed, artistic, creative, intelligent...I can see this protagonist winning lots of fans (and her "Guardian" – will inspire more than a few crushes I do think!) An exciting narrative with well-developed characters, this book yells out video game or 2D animation to me.

A. says

This is probably the worst book I've read in my life.

At its best it's formulaic and dull. At its worst it's offensive, and at the end of the day, it's just badly written. It's god-awful. It took six years and 115 drafts to get to 340 pages of lazy analogies, mad-lib characters, and an unnecessary number of outfit descriptions? If this is the final product, I can only imagine that the original manuscript would have best been classified as 'horror'.

The author, Maria Lewis, has drawn comparisons between her book and that of Robert Louis Stevenson's "Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde", describing "Who's Afraid" as a modern, gender-bent version of the latter "with werewolves and swearing".

This immediately makes it clear that Lewis has never been in the same building as a copy of Stevenson's book, never mind actually reading it or bothering to acquaint herself with its overarching themes.

Free lit lesson, kids: saying that Jekyll and Hyde is the story of a man that turns into a monster is like saying that Orwell's 1984 is the story of a guy running afoul of the law. Both are factually accurate statements, but are about as devoid of usefulness and meaning as the entirety Lewis's book.

The protagonist of "Who's Afraid" is Tommi Grayson - a young, cool art curator who is probably supposed to be relatable but spends the first several pages of the book rolling her eyes and slagging off an artist she's working with. She mocks him for being pretentious and "a hack" despite his being five years older and - as the book itself tells us - a sold-out success in the local art world.

Not a solid start for creating a likeable lead character.

Relatedly, there are several scenes where Tommi puts on her judgey pants and tells us about how vapid and fake the girl is that her friend wants to hook-up with and how deplorably skinny one of the in-passing characters is. Because nothing screams "positive female role model" like being a c*nt to or about other

women.

One of the most important things we as the reader need to know about Tommi is that she has blue hair. We know this is important because the book repeatedly tells us that she has blue hair. She has blue hair, and Maori ancestry, and was raised by her mother and grandparents, and suffers a traumatic event in her life at age 22, and wears band t-shirts, and is artistic, and sassy, and sarcastic, and derisively mocks people outside of her immediate group of friends. All of which is a 100% true to life description of the author herself, with the exception that Maria Lewis has PURPLE hair, so it's totally different and not at all a wish fulfillment fantasy.

Tommi, like any good self-inserted literary heroine, turns out to be the MOST powerful new werewolf anyone's seen, and she has RARE TALENTS and immediately masters DIFFICULT SKILLS, and her 400+ year old love interest hasn't met ANYBODY as great and cool and awesome as her in his WHOLE LIFE, WOW.

I can only assume that Lewis has no intention for her book's appeal to last beyond the next 6-12 months, since she's littered it with pop culture references, half of which are already dated at the time of publishing. I'm guessing it's supposed to make her characters "hip" and "relatable" but it succeeds mostly in making them "trite" and "outdated".

Additionally, for a book being praised for its diversity, it sure is interesting how the Maori characters are the villains and would-be rapists of the story. A clan of literal monsters. I guess the only good Maori is a half-Maori raised by white folks in Scotland? Three cheers for diversity!

Also noteworthy that Lewis describes Tommi's Nigerian fuck-buddy looking at her like "a lion looking at an antelope". Like on the Serengeti. Like in Africa? Get it? Because he's black? I guess?

So progressive.

"Who's Afraid" distances itself from the Young Adult market with its inclusion of fairly graphic violence and sexual themes. There's no problem with these things, but why would a book with descriptions of both sexual assault and sexual intimacy use words like "hoo-ha" and "giney" when referring to female genitalia? Are we 12? Are you kidding? Not a small amount of the book feels like it started out as Young Adult Fiction and was simply aged up to be seem more edgy.

Nothing about this story is groundbreaking or unique. It's every other urban fantasy/paranormal romance with the serial numbers filed off. There's a feisty female lead! With unique, quirky attributes! She has a cast of quirky and unique friends! In this, the lovingly described urban locale of mass appeal! There is a mysterious male figure sent to guide her. He has secrets! And gives our modern, feminist protagonist warm, tingly feelings in her hoo-ha!

Truly, no such book has been written before.

I'm not saying there isn't a need for diverse, strong characters in urban fantasy. There is! But maybe we could aim a little bit higher than the poorly written masturbatory fantasies of a Daily Mail reporter.