



Unleashed

Kristopher Reisz

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The author of Tripping to Somewhere delivers his second novel of urban fantasy. During his senior year, smart, athletic Daniel makes a mistake. Guilt overwhelms him and he quickly falls in with a group of outcasts. Misty, the groups leader, lets Daniel in on a secret: theyve learned to shapeshift.

Unleashed Details

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From Reader Review Unleashed for online ebook

Brooke says

You know the kids in school, the outcasts. They're the kids who wear dark clothes and combat boots. They don't quite fit in, and everyone in school treats them like they are trash or don't exist. At least that's how it was when I was in high school. If you weren't a popular star football player or cheerleader you were on the outside looking in. That's what Misty and her pack are, the outcasts. They protect each other from the "hand lickers," and stand up for each other when they are in trouble.

What an original tale Kristopher Reisz has written for our enjoyment! This is probably the first time in a long time that I don't know what to say for one of my reviews. I thoroughly enjoyed this story, and had trouble putting it down in order to get some sleep. I just had to know what path these teens would take, and what problems would arise for them next. Daniel isn't always likeable, but his actions lead him in the direction he needs to take in order to find out where his life is going. Misty is troubled and just wants to be loved, and believes that Daniel wouldn't hurt her. Which is something we can all relate to.

I must praise Reisz on giving a fresh twist to the Werewolf. You also really get a glimpse into the life of high school students. There is drugs, sex, and fear. Fear of what their future's hold for them. Some are scared of leaving gritty Birmingham, and some are afraid they will be stuck there forever. The characters are real and relatable. You know what they are going through. You can even understand why they would want to consult the mushroom god in order to be turned into wolves and prowl the night. I think we all would like to escape our own realities, and that's why we read.

This is a strong story with a good ending all wrapped up in a one hit book. It's nice to not have to wait for a sequel, and I'm looking forward to reading Reisz first book, Tripping to Somewhere.

Julie Zantopoulos says

Okay, immediate DNF! By page 26 I had 4 red flags (and could have had more). One for use of the r word in reference to a less than smart character. One for girl on girl hate and slut shaming: "remember how I complained about Genevieve being in my health class? Wondering why bother since she's already got every Crotch critter in the textbook" WTF! Another for the phrase "dancing around like a short bus kid off his Ritalin" cause Gain WTF!? And yet another for continued girl hate and fat shaming "I wouldn't have changed classes if I'd known I'd have to stare at her back fat all day." Yeah, that was 26 pages too much, I'm out. TBR JAR YOU DID ME DIRTY.

Usually, I don't rate books I read this little of but to hell with that, this is garbage. That language and attitude is not okay.

Emily says

I think that Reisz has the potential to be a great writer.

Tripping to Somewhere was one of those books that's flawed in ways that make it, for me, more exciting and more interesting than a lot of books that are technically better constructed. So I was half-excited when I saw *Unleashed* on the processing shelf - I didn't even know he had a new book coming out. And a werewolf book at that!

Misty is a poor, biracial girl who has discovered the one ray of light in her dead-end life: magic mushrooms. Mushrooms that allow her and her friends to transform into wolves. Daniel is a little better off, by no means rich, but his family has scrimped and saved to allow him to get a college admissions counselor. He ends up bowing to family pressure and getting a fake ADHD diagnosis to get more time on the SATs and - eventually - admission to Cornell. They meet, strike up a romance, and soon Daniel is part of Misty's wolf pack, torn between the freedom he finds there and the life his parents have planned for him.

There are a lot of fascinating themes and ideas here. There's the decay in Birmingham, Alabama, the "rot-eater god" of the magic mushrooms, which is resonant and beautifully depicted. And there's the conflict between wildness and civilization - which is much clunkier, I thought. The idea that the majority of people are shallow, civilized, boring and bored, is a dumb high-school conceit. It's an utter cop-out. You can't dismiss the majority of humanity as "hand-lickers" that easily.

Generally, the book is weighed down by lumps of exposition, way too much telling instead of showing, way too little subtlety. And it lacks the crazy, reckless energy that redeemed many of the faults of *Tripping to Somewhere*. Still, it did show flashes of brilliance. Still, I think Reisz will be a great writer someday.

The FountainPenDiva, Old school geek chick and lover of teddy bears says

Overall, *Unleashed* was a much better book than I thought it would be. This isn't a book for the Twi-hard crowd (thank goodness). Unlike most readers, I wasn't put off by all the drinking, drug use and sexuality the characters engaged in. Let's be honest here, teens are *doing* these things. If anything this kind of moral ambiguity and grittiness makes the book and the characters feel far more real. Interestingly *Unleashed* doesn't take place in some hip, cosmopolitan city, but in Birmingham, Alabama and this setting also creates the sense of darkness and dread and even claustrophobia. And even though actual racism plays a small part in the narrative, the bloody history of *Bombingham* during the Civil Rights movement is a reminder of just how some wounds haven't quite healed.

Unleashed is the story of Daniel Morning and Misty Sandlin, complete opposites in every way possible. Daniel is the high school golden boy who is quite tarnished. Accepted to Cornell University based on a lie, he lives his life trying to be the perfect student--getting the right grades, playing the right sports, dating the right girl and even attending church. Misty is a biracial teen who wears a shell of insouciance, though inside she's the walking wounded. She's both volatile and fragile, fiercely loyal to her family and her friends. When these two collide, Daniel begins to question his well-ordered existence, and he envies the freedom he believes Misty and her group of outsiders represents. However, there's more to Misty than just her "f*ck you" attitude. What I liked about Misty is even though she truly finds herself in love with Daniel, she doesn't lose what makes her tough. Too many supposed kick-ass teen heroines stop being tough the moment they smell testosterone and end up whiny and boring.

There were other characters in the novel, but unfortunately for Mr. Reisz he doesn't spend a lot of time on them, which is a shame because they needed to be fleshed out. I had no idea whether Daniel's friend Bwana was male or female or what they looked like. The rest of his friends seemed to be just cardboard stereotypes - the jocks, the popular girl, the outcasts. In a way, this lack makes Unleashed a bit unfinished.

I don't want to give away too much about the werewolf aspect; suffice it to say it was a vastly different take on the werewolf mythos, which I liked. There were no full moons or ancient clans or any of those other tired old tropes that keep getting recycled in the paranormal genre. In fact, I view this for of shifting more in line with Native American spirituality and myth than the European bite on the neck.

I'm knocking one BIG star from my rating because of the EPIC COVER FAIL for the paperback edition. Why, oh why, are New York publishers so terrified of showing an interracial couple on the cover of a book? E-pubs have been doing it for years and no one (at least no one who really matters) has ever complained. This fail isn't as bad as the cover fail for Justine Labastier's Liar and Cindy Pon's Silver Phoenix, but the less *controversial* "hands and half face" is still troublesome. One day I hope the publishing companies in New York will actually start being run by grown ups who aren't scared of changing demographics. I won't hold my breath though.

Karin says

Daniel's doesn't feel in control of his life. He is a senior in high school and seems to have everything going for him. He just received word from Cornell that he has been accepted and everyone is excited - except him. Daniel knows he doesn't deserve the early acceptance into Cornell. He feels like a cheater.

Daniel's parents found a doctor that agreed to diagnose Daniel as ADHD which allowed him more time for his SATs. He has never felt comfortable with this decision, but his parents insist he deserves his spot at Cornell despite how he got it. With his feelings unsettled about his future, he begins to notice a group of kids that are on the fringe of school society. The outcasts.

Misty and twin brother Marc are of mixed race in Birmingham, AL where thoughts of the civil rights movements are still fresh on peoples' minds. They are frequently referred to as "stray" or "mutt" by their peers and struggle to maintain the motivation to attend school. Misty and Marc, together with their friends Val and Eric, begin to visit an abandoned furnace and discover a wild mushrooms growing in the dank and dark building. They decide to eat the mushrooms hoping for a wild ride. They discover animalistic instincts they didn't know they had after ingesting the mushrooms and shift into wolves, leaving behind their humanity. At first, this transformation is short, but as they continue to make the transformation their ability to stay in wolf form gets longer and longer.

Daniel and Misty begin to form a relationship. Daniel just wants an out from his pre-determined life. Misty is looking to the future. She invites him to join the pack and sets Daniel's life on a very different path.

While this book isn't a MUST read, it is enjoyable and a unique concept for a werewolf story. The language is rough (sometimes crude) and there are many sexual situations between various couples. This is definately not a book for the typical middle school reader.

Jerry Wojenski says

Personally, I was not offended by the fowl language or the casual marijuana use. Maybe its because I have worked with college freshman (in a southern city similar to Birmingham) for nearly 7 years and understand that this is common for many 18 year olds. In fact, I think Reisz understated the use of fowl language and sexual innuendos. In the author's defense, he was trying to paint a realistic picture of the world these young adults grew up in. He wanted us to understand that they were trapped in a dying town (hence the references to Charlie What You Say and prison and the freedom marches). The characters were caught in a town that offered them nothing and so they survived day by day getting lost in a haze of pot smoke and sex. I think the problem is that the author's plot sequence was a bit off. The story should have begun by letting the reader follow both Misty and Daniel around in their "ordinary" worlds. Show us Misty's world and how empty it is; show us how shallow Daniel's life has become. Then, the author should have introduced the wolf aspect in real time and not as a flashback. And finally bring in the good ole boy, Daniel, to the pack. My other qualm was that the perspective was so jumpy and some of the character's inner voices so shallow, that I never really understood how their feelings were developing or changing. It seemed like one minute Daniel's falling head over heels for Misty and then for really no good reason he has a change of heart, but then again he decides he loves her. I know the author does try to explain their thoughts and feelings, but it didn't feel honest or complete. Overall, the book was a good read, but nothing fantastic.

Haralambi Markov says

As a debut post to my specialized in reviewing blog, I am going to report my impressions from "Unleashed" by Kristopher Reisz. But first I want to brag that this is a personal copy sent straight from the author himself, the very first I have ever received without winning a giveaway. So I don't feel like a virgin in that area anymore and after the squealing was ticked on my to-do-list I set out to read it.

I was a bit skeptical with whether I am truly going to enjoy it or not since the paranormal limelight favored werewolves, which are in my book least favorable. As a reader and writer my accent falls on magic and mental power, whereas the werewolves are thoroughly physical and carnal. TV movies showing unintelligent half human, half wolf monstrosities didn't help either to build a better view. Even when I researched shamanism and learned that werewolves change into whole wolves and don't rely on the moon and had a deeper spiritual symbolism I wasn't very keen. But I read this book and everything has changed for the better. People don't joke around, when they say that written words have power.

Being a teen and the book being young adult with characters my age I think it was a match made in library heaven. The story is told by multiple points of view, but follows mainly Daniel, who is the shooting star in his high school in Birmingham and has the perfect life. He is the most popular, most athletic and has one a place in Cornwell, an Ivy League college. However on his path to fit the part of the perfect pupil with brightest future, Daniel has lost his own path and his identity.

Watching Misty, one of the werewolves and outsiders in Daniel's school, rescuing a run over dog by leaving class is the trigger event that snips Daniel from the glamour cliques of high school and sets him on his way to self-discovery. Misty and Daniel grow fonder to each other until they become a couple and together with Misty's pack, consisting of her brother Mark and her friends Val and Eric, roam the city as werewolves.

However as wolves the pack loses all ties to humanity and while Daniel is isolated by the pack for hiding his admission to Cornell, he tries to restore his friends back to humanity. The climax comes at a post graduation party, where former friends stand against each other in a suspenseful and also very poetic ending.

It's interesting to note how the actual transformation from humans to werewolves occurs, since I am not aware of anyone else to have done it the same way. The pack needs a catalyst to allow their shape to shift and in this book the part is taken by the Amanita mushroom usually known as a hallucination inducing drug. With it and the mention of weed Kristopher draws an interesting aspect about a twenty first century teenager and the use of mild drugs. Apart from the usual symbolism these details add depth to the characters and the reality of the book.

Kristopher does a very interesting job with the school's outcasts building up their back ground, giving them different and yet interconnecting personalities, making them carriers of some kind of message for the reader. Daniel is the shooting star, who is forgotten by the school once he disobeys the popularity order and he shows how ephemeral and treacherous fame is. Misty is a gentle dreamer encased in a tough shell to crack and she is an example what happens, when a person has been held in the steel vice of life for too long.

I admire what mister Reisz has done with the werewolf aspect of the story. As a reader of his blog I have learned why he chose werewolves, because they seem most real from the most paranormal creatures existing. Every human being holds a primal side to his character that transforms him in an animal metaphorically speaking, even though there is proof that in the middle ages people were blamed for werewolves exactly because of their more primal behavior. In shamanism the wolf is a spiritual animal that stands for reinvention and finding one's way and one's self through life. Kristopher does an amazing job combining both. The new found pack is on the brink to lose their link to humanity, but once they save themselves they emerge wiser, more confident in their own skin and more knowing of who they are. Basically what happens to all teens once, but without the werewolf aspect.

In conclusion I can only add that "Unleashed" offers a lot to think about to its readers presented in a very dynamic and emotion filled story, where one bad decision leads to others and so on until the end changes your whole world.

Savannah (Books With Bite) says

This book took me a while to read mostly because it disturbed me. By that I mean, it has waayy to much drugs, sex, and foul language for a YA book. While the plot and writing was good, it was not my cup of tea.

Everybody knows Daniel Morning is a star. He always has been. What they don't know is how restless he feels, how he hates always living up to other people's expectations. The urge to break free is beginning to gnaw at his insides.

Then Daniel meets Misty. She's smoky and tender, and she lives by her own rules. She lets him into her pack of outcasts, and in on their little secret: They have learned to shape shift and have been prowling then night as wolves.

Daniel falls hard for this intoxicating life of raw abandon, and he falls hard for Misty. The freedom to follow his most basic instincts is like nothing he's ever felt. But Daniel is about to find out that such freedom comes at a price...."

The book starts off with Daniel and his friends. Daniel is the "shooting star." He rules the school. Typical jock with a good head on his shoulders. Then he meets Misty. He is intrigued by her and wants to know her more. I find that Daniel's character is really, I mean really indecisive. At times, I wanted to slap him across the head for him to make a decision already. Daniel wants to bad, then good, bad, then good. And while he is trying to make up his mind, he hurts other people in the process. IE, His parents, loses his girlfriend, he's friends, etc.

They shift into wolves by eating mushrooms they find at an abandon plant. (Yes, I know. I thought that maybe they weren't really turning into wolves, they are just tripping really badly.) But indeed this mushroom allowed them to change. They go through typical teenage problems. Daniel had a good life, while Misty was raised in a rough one. They fight and rumble amongst other stuff.

In the end, Daniel saves the day yet again. He rushes to find the pack and stops them from making a really bad mistake.

Kristopher Reisz wrote a good book. Although I think the book might have been just as interesting without all the other junk. Nonetheless, this book had a different storyline then most werewolve books. I wouldn't recommend it for any young reader to read this.

Wendy says

Picks up in the back half, if you can make it through the first half.

Karen says

I loved this book! I can't even tell you in detail what it was that I loved, but I just loved it...

After I read the first 100 pages, I posted on Goodreads that there wasn't any drama or action, and there wasn't. But it seemed that after that things started happening.

This book was about a senior named Daniel who was the star athlete, academic, popular kid-just all around shining star-and it is also about a senior named Misty, who is the complete opposite. She doesn't care about much and is about to give up on everything.

Then Misty meets Daniel and things start to change for her. The only problem is is that Daniel is dating Angie and he is leaving for college after graduation.

These obstacles seem to be put on the back burner for awhile though (except for the Angie thing because Daniel breaks up with her to be with Misty). Daniel refrains from telling Misty about college because he doesn't want her to think he isn't worth her time.

When Misty starts to trust Daniel she decides to introduce him into the pack, which consists on her twin brother and their two best friends. But the pack is more then just the four of them. It is also a ritual that they do prior to turning into werewolves!

Of course this freaks Daniel out at first, but the more he thinks about it and thinks about Misty, the more he is open to this whole thing. He actually looks forward to it because it is the time that he can actually be himself and not have to worry about anything or anyone else. But not everything that the pact does is innocent and people start to get hurt.

People are physically hurt, betrayed, heartbroken...there is a bunch of typical teenage angst, a lot of ego issues and people being put in their place.

This book covers family, friends, love, anger, forgiveness, growing up, etc.

The characters in this book were great and the character development of both Misty and Daniel was spectacular. I loved watching them grow.

Even without the werewolves this book would have been great! But the werewolves gave it a different spin.

If you haven't read this book you really must! This is the first book I have read by him, but I am absolutely going to check out another one of his.

Justin says

really hated this book

Julie says

I got to page 53 before I couldn't read anymore. Maybe it's because I am still in middle school or something, but I thought the constant swearing was WAY too much. and, we hardly got anywhere interesting in the first 50 pages, so why bother?

And, do non-Mormon teenagers actually *act* like that? because I don't know any older seniors who do constant swearing, (I don't think there was a single page that didn't swear at least twice!)

Don't read this people's. ever.

Homewood Public Library says

Daniel Morning is the golden boy; popular and bright, his early acceptance to Cornell seems to seal his future. A future his parents have been pushing since Daniel was in eighth grade. Extra study sessions, tutors, advanced courses, school clubs and activities, even night courses at Samford University to give him an extra edge. And when that wasn't enough, a little harmless cheating to get the SAT scores needed to guarantee his place in the Ivy League school.

Misty Sandlin and her brother, Marc, and their friends, Eric and Val, also attend McCammon High, but that's about all they have in common with Daniel Morning and his buddies. Misty and her friends are barely tolerated. And it's not just their combat boots, thrift store clothes and constant presence in ISS that sets them

apart. They have a strangely superior attitude at odds with their situation in life. Misty and Daniel are on the opposite ends of the social spectrum.

But Daniel has become fascinated by Misty. She seems to represent everything he craves but doesn't have: freedom, love of life, excitement. What Daniel doesn't realize is that when Misty prowls the streets of Birmingham, she really prowls. An exotic find at a local derelict furnace has given Misty and her friends the power to shift into wolves. And when Misty brings Daniel into the pack, it changes him in more ways than he could imagine.

This novel is difficult to describe. On the surface its a werewolf novel set in Birmingham, Alabama. But there are so many issues going on throughout the book that the lycanthropy isn't the only focus. The Romeo and Juliet relationship of Misty and Daniel, the yearning for freedom, relationships between the teenage friends, power and misuse of power, and discovering, and acting on, your heart's desire all play a part in this complex urban fantasy. I recommend this intense and well-written novel to older teens who want to see their city from a different perspective.

Jennifer Wardrip says

Reviewed by Lynn Crow for TeensReadToo.com

Daniel Morning has a beautiful girlfriend, an early acceptance to Cornell, and the world at his fingertips. So why does he feel so trapped?

When he gets to know Misty and her friends, he realizes how much freedom lies beyond the rules and restrictions set down by his parents and teachers. Misty's group is a pack in the most literal sense of the word. At night they eat a mushroom sacred to the god of decay, and shape-shift into wolves to prowl the streets and mark their territory.

At first disturbed and disbelieving, Daniel finds himself sucked into this shadow world of magic and defiance. His grades slip and his girlfriend ditches him for another guy, but with Misty, he doesn't care. Still, he can't bring himself to tell her the truth--that despite their connection, he's planning on leaving come fall. But then the pack's activities cross over the line between conscious rebellion and wild destructive abandon, and Daniel realizes he has to make a choice: between Cornell and Misty, between safety and freedom, and between the perfect life he used to have and all the lives that now stand to be lost.

Kristopher Reisz's UNLEASHED has one of the most unique takes on an established mythology that I've ever seen. Its twist on the werewolf tales will keep readers guessing right until the end. Daniel is not always likable, but his motivations are easy to understand, and his growth throughout the story is well-developed. The descriptions of shape-shifting and being wolves are so vivid readers will wish they could experience it for themselves. It's an intense, can't-put-it-down read that will have readers turning pages long after they should be asleep.

Highly recommended to all fans of urban fantasy and the supernatural.

Cristian Cnca says

Book review

The book that i finished was Unleashed. Which is about a teen who has a bright future ahead of him. His name is Daniel morning who is the shooting star of his school is tired of being directed by his parents who tell him that theyu want him to get a better life.In his senior of highscool he has to work harder than anyone else but all trhe work he putup with. Are now over because he got accepted to Cornell an ivy league school but he is not all proud , he had to cheat to get there by lieing and saying he had hyperactive attention disorder. He was going to be the only with a chance to escape Birmingham but when he was at goverment class a dog was hit by a car and while the class didnt do anything but misty did. Misty was an outcast she was a trouble maker who had her own pack, a lot of people called her a stray and other names that made her mean.

After Misty rescued the dog Daniel wanted to find out why she had gone while he the shooting star didnt do anything.So daniel told his cousin keith to get him misty's phone and home number. He told his cousin not to tell anyone because he had a girlfriend named angie and a lot of friends. keith really liked angie an told a person that daniel hooked up with misty but he also knew that by the time it got to angie his name wouldnt even be mentioned. When he was finally able to talk to her he asked her why she saved the dog but misty took him with her brother marc and her two frriends val and eric. They went to an abandoned furnace qwhere Misty and her friends had first learned to shapeshift into wolves and misty wanted to show and tell daniel about it. They discovered how to shape shift by eating a cooked mushroom cap that was locatd in the furnace. Val did some research on the mushroom that was called amanita scarleta that was used in old times to transform people into animals. When they were going to transform for the first time Marc put music and all of the sudden they were dancing and saying want to be a wolf. when They told Daniel to do it he did it and when the amanita scarleta wore off he got scared and freaked out.But in his other life the one that he thought wasnt a game he was tarting to slack of and he stopped going to his colledge night classes.

But whem daniel got used to the idea of shapeshifting he went back to misty and bought himself a pair of boots that the pack had. After he started shifting into a wolf he started to feel a wolf inside of him and he started turning aggressive. When he was going to the furnace he saw wolf head taggings around the city that marked the wolfs territory. Daniel knew the pack wouldnt accept that he was going to go to coirnell so he didnt tell them but he knew that the pack accepted him. Daniel started falling in love with misty and shapeshifting but the other side of the problem was that his grades and his school side suffered. So Daniel came up with an idea to let the pack remember him after he left.His idea was to tag the school but when the school got on fire he had to help eric get out because he couldnt stop remembering his brother that died.The only way they could shapeshift was to let go all of their humanity and let their primitive animal instincts take over their mind. But because of his brother he couldnt shift so daniel scared everyone away and helped him escape. Daniel wasnt stupid and knew that if they got evidence it was the pack and him that would go to jail so he change the boots and burned their clothes. But Daniel didnt know what shape shifting meant to eric but eric had his own plans for revenge against daniels cousin and people who treated them like trash.Eric knew thatkeith had a party and convinced the pack into killing them and everyone at the party. When Daniel figured out what they were going to do he went every where to try to look for them but now they changed the amount of mushroom caos they were going to eat and their chant which was now break every thing.Daniel went to the backdoor of the party to stop them when he saw how many amanita scatleta there were inthe alleys of birmingham he realised tnat the rot eater god was rising thae pack nicvknamed it that because it was eating the rot in birmingham. When daniel saw them he was trying to convince misty to unleash the wolf by killing those people he managed to do this by telling hewr the lines of a midsummers night. When she tried

to turn back she couldnt Eric got so mad that he bit Daniel in the throat and started hitting Misty to turn her back but Marc got so mad that he broke Erics leg bone. Marc had always been there for Misty even when they were small he helped her deal with her parents divorce but now he was still loyal and went to call help for Daniel. Eric saw his pack betray him and left. Overall I think the book is great and it didnt let me put down the book.

2. My goal for this week was to read 200 pages. But I only read 190 pages. The main characters of Unleashed are Daniel, Misty, and Angie. Daniel is a smart kid who is trying his best to make his parents happy by getting a better life but in the process he is not happy with himself and one thing he has to do to get into an Ivy League school. Misty is a girl who is an outsider who has her own pack but a lot of people think that she is ghetto but she has more courage. Because when a dog was hit by a car she went to help it while Danny and his class didnt do anything. Angie is Danny's girlfriend who tries to support him in his decisions but she had been noticing something going on with Daniel.

1. My goal for this week was to read 70 pg. This week I read 50 pgs.

The plot of the book in Unleashed is about these teens who can shape shift into wolves. While another teen hangs out with his friends and tells his friends that he got accepted into an Ivy League school. But he is not happy because of what he did in his SAT's. The shape shifters run away from the cops after they were about to be caught painting a wall.
