



Vexed

Wren Michaels

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Vodou stole her life. A gay ghost stole her boots. And the man who stole her heart stole her memories. Kena plans to get it all back.

Ex-cop Kena's life is filled with regret, beer, and Cheetos. That is, until her ghostly roomie sends her dumpster diving, leading her to a sexy stranger named Luc and a fate she'd rather not remember. As Kena's memories resurface, so do her feelings for Luc, the man she's secretly been in love with for the last thousand years. And he needs her for more than a stroll down memory lane.

Vodou spirits, known as Loa, have been trapped in human form, and are trying to make their way back to the spirit world. But Luc's brother is possessed by a vengeance demon conjured at the hands of NOLA's crime syndicate kingpin. Saving him means damning herself to a spirit prison in a loveless, arranged union with the very man she's supposed to rescue. But not helping Luc's brother sentences him to death, leaving New Orleans in the hands of black magick, and losing Luc forever.

Vexed Details

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From Reader Review Vexed for online ebook

Cianna Sunshine & Mountains Book Reviews says

Wow! I've been on a paranormal romance kick lately (NerdGirl is getting me out of my comfort zone), and I happened upon this book. I am SO glad I did. The cover did not alert me to how Amazing that story was!

I love myth and legend, I've said it once, I'll say it again. I LOVE it. This book was based around the Loa, Voodoo gods and goddesses that help guide and protect humans. They come when called in voodoo ceremonies. Well, in this book, they were trapped in human form.

We start out by meeting Kena, and her gay ghost roommate! (He teaches Zumba! Dying), and then we happen upon Luc. From that moment on, it's just a crazy ride of drama, romance, and some heavy heavy voodoo! They have battles ahead of them, and Kena is just getting into this world. She's got a whole bunch of history she isn't even aware of, all she knows is Luc makes her weak in the knees!

Overall, this book is awesome! Micheals is a master storyteller. It's a great balance of romance and the paranormal elements and was perfect for a pre-halloween read! Kena is a girl after my own heart with her leather boots, and her sweet tooth. I was on the edge of my seat the whole time. I wasn't sure where it was going, but I was excited to go along for the ride!

This was my first book by this author, and I'll be on the lookout for more! Her writing style is not to be missed, it's up there with some of the best paranormal romance novelists! Get a copy!

Suzanne (Lily) says

My first thoughts...

First 20% was hard work, from then on though I couldn't put it down. Struggled a bit with how some situations panned out but my love of the two main characters helped me to overlook those moments. Now to write my review...

I received a copy of this book in return for an honest review

Kena is a police officer, waiting impatiently for her name to be cleared and hanging out with the gay ghost she shares her apartment with. He's a lively character and Kena's deceased brother's widowed partner. I hear you, the mortal brother is dead and his boyfriend the ghost is still walking the earth. Hang in there, this is a good time to say that although this story begins in what seems to be a normal environment it ends up being an urban fantasy set amongst humans.

The first 20% of the story was hard to get into. Normally I would say struggling to get into an urban fantasy book was due to world building but I think it was more to do with not knowing who to trust and the number of characters (and their names) introduced early on.

Once I got into the story, I was highlighting continuously. Trying to stay on top of the characters various abilities was a task requiring attention to detail. I loved the main characters and found the situation they were faced with crushing. It all seemed so perfect yet frail. I was so sure love could triumph, but we'll have to

wait until the next book to find out whether or not it does.

The story has references to TV shows and everyday descriptions, woven into the story. They had me smiling, I was a bit unsure on one reference, googled it and it cracked me up, it fit in perfectly!

Initially, it was hard to know who were the good and bad guys, then it is pointed out that good and bad need to coexist. We are introduced to the supernatural world of Voodoo. Some acknowledge it, some are fearful of it and there are some who will use it to drive their agenda. Stories are handed down from generation to generation keeping the knowledge of the spirits alive.

A lot of the story surrounded Kena wanting Luc to share what he knew, but nothing could break his resolve. He has a major reason for not doing so, but this is revealed to the reader via Kena as she uncovers what is going on. Her fate is sealed and it isn't until she is aware of it can she appreciate being spared the knowledge she acquires. When she realises her dire situation you can understand her anger and frustration. Yet to not yield to the expectations put upon her could be catastrophic.

A couple of issues bothered me, editing errors that had me reading sections at least twice and the other was with plot development. There were several situations where it seemed the rules were adjusted to rules of convenience to suit the end story. Neither took away from the fact that I enjoyed the story, but it did become frustrating at times.

In essence, this is a story of reluctant sacrifice and the price that is paid for the greater good of others.

What I enjoyed:

- *Loved the main characters
- *Stolen moments were the best
- *Lot's of humour woven in with the use of shows / descriptions
- *Cookies :)

What I struggled with:

- *Rules of convenience became frustrating
- *First 20% was hard
- *Hard to know who to trust
- *A lot of characters and characters of varying ability made the story one you had to read carefully
- *Editing issues that had me reading sections twice

This review and others can be found at: <http://edgyreviews.com/2015/11/01/vex...>

Mary Kirkland says

This is the first book I've read from this author but after reading this, I doubt it will be my last. We get to know Kena and her ghost pal AJ first and things turn kinda funny when she goes dumpster diving for her favorite pair of boots. That's where she meets Luc and he's all tall, handsome and just being near him makes her girly parts explode in pleasure. *Yes, she actually says that.* And now every time I bake cookies, I'll think of him. You'll understand why after you read it.

But Luc is there for serious reasons and we soon find out that there's a lot more to these two than we first

thought. Turns out they are Loa and Kena has been in hiding for many years and she doesn't remember her past life but now they have to make her remember because they need her help.

The world building in this story was outstanding, we really get a sense of what's around them, what's going on and who they are and have been for many years. Kena and Luc really were wonderfully complex characters and I loved how we got glimpses of their back story through memories, it really gave us a chance to get to know them better. There's a lot going on but it was easy for me to keep up and keep all the secondary characters and their stories straight.

Tomika Campisi says

I received this book free in exchange for a fair and honest review. All opinions are my own.

An entertaining yet action packed story of love that lasts through all times with a funny twist of a gay ghost brother in law thrown in makes for a great story that brought me to tears more than once.

Tina says

3.5 stars

Paranormal with a different twist. No vampires or werewolves. But instead it uses the Haitian based Voodoo spirits known as Loa as its basis.

The loa spirits are trapped on earth in human form following a battle during the 1800s. The heroine, Kena is actually the Loa goddess of love Ezili Freda but her memories have been wiped away and she has no knowledge of her past. But that changes with the presence of a mysterious stranger named Luc.

Luc is actually the Loa god Balinjo, a healer and he must coax Kena's memories back so they can save his brother the warrior god Ogoun Feray who also happens to be Kena's mate back in the spirit world. They must save him because if they don't all of the Loa will be trapped in human form forever and be unable to return back to their spirit home, which kinda like Mt. Olympus for the Voodoo Loa set.

But as Kena regains her memories she isn't so sure she wants to become Loa again. She is in love with Luc/Balinjo and has always been. Theirs is a Romeo/Juliet thing where as gods they were forbidden. As humans they could be together. But staying human would seal the fate both for Feray (who would remain possessed as a demon) and the rest of the Loa. Could she be that selfish?

This was a fun book to read. There was great dialogue, great supporting characters and a surprising amount to humor and snarky wit. The conflict it sets up is great. And I especially love how much flavor the book gives about New Orleans and Louisiana. I have read other PNRs set in NOLA and sometimes I feel like it is just another generic town. This one has atmosphere with a twist of attitude. Kinda like seeing NOLA while watching the Beyonce Formation video.

As far as supporting characters AJ, Kena's ghostly roommate was hoot as were the Ghede Loa, the loa of the dead. They were like a cross between Parliament Funkadelic meets Sons of Anarchy meets a live sex show.

They were fun, irreverent and used the word 'hooker' like a term of endearment. Meanwhile in contrast Papa Legba is like a dignified Morgan Freeman watching over them all.

As far a romance, Luc and Kena were in love. I mean capital letters IN LOVE and you get that it was soul deep but they just couldn't be, because of honor and because of what they were. So it was romantic in that sense and you wondered how it would all come together in the end. I am glad that the author didn't make Feray this terrible guy. He was as much caught up in fate as they were.

I drop a few stars because the great plan to right everything felt kinda muddy and really too complicated. And there were one too many "twists" in the end.

But overall I really enjoyed this. I hope we revisit this group again.

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

Covers. Nothing annoys the crap out of me than publishers playing fast and loose with the ethnically ambiguous heroine/hero. It's 2016 and Black women DO read. In fact, we read LOTS and it would be nice to see our different hues better represented on covers. Other than that, I'm reading this because I adore a kick ass heroine. Here's to the alpha females...we need more of them!

Sylvia Schneider says

This is the first book i have read by Wren Michaels....I can say...it did not disappoint! I love the characters... from Kena's gay "roommate" AJ to Luc her soul mate...to Vinny her ex. Kena is a wonderful heroine, as Luc is a wonderful hero....i hate to do spoilers...so all i can say the tials and tribulations these to go through to stay together are unreal. Love the voodoo aspect and the setting in New Orleans. This is a funny, sad, heart warming , amazing read....a 5 star if i ever read one!

Jan Fowler says

Amazing!

I had no idea what I was in for. This was my first digital book purchase. I purchased it several months ago to support my friend. I wasn't really sure if I could get on board with this whole paperless reading. I finally took the plunge and started reading it. Not only did I thoroughly enjoy this paranormal romance, but it brought me back to reading. Thanks, Wren!

Cyrene Olson says

Uncaged Book Reviews:

Dark vs. Light. And the gray in between it all. And still this book is so much more. Humor, an action-packed

storyline, a forbidden love and mystery and intrigue, with a kick-ass heroine and heroes. The world building is amazing, the sights and smells of New Orleans just leap off the pages and the characters are hard to forget. This is a book I'll remember for a long time, and it's going on my "to be read again" pile. Reviewed by Cyrene

Full review at UncagedBooks.com

Exquisite Reviews says

Ok... Can we start with how much I LOVED A.J. the ghost in this book....

This is the story of Kena an ex-cop with a troublemaker for an EX and A.J. her gay ghost bff who is also a Zumba dancer and fashion extraordinaire.

Kena is living life but not really living her life plagued with past mistake and dealing with her roommate who happens to be a boots thief. When she meets Luc she is covered in trash but can't help an notice the new building manager who is also really sexy. Kena doesn't know it but a thousand years of memories are about resurface and she needs to use everything in her kick ass arsenal to make sure she doesn't loose Luc again.

Let me say that when I read the synopsis for this book I was a little confused as to how a gay zumba instructor who is a ghost would work in this story. I was definitely surprised how well it worked and how much I laughed while reading this book. Kena was a kick ass chick and I really enjoyed her brand of sassy and Luc well he is just dreamy and I once again have a new book boyfriend. Thank you for that Wren Michaels I always love new boyfriends and let's be honest the smell of fresh baked cookies will forever be in my heart.

I won't go into too many details because I hate to give out spoilers, but this book brings you action, laughter, romance and lots of HOT sex...

Shakera says

What's better than a paranormal romance? A paranormal romance with a kick ass heroine (that's what)! Oh, and a gay best friend/roommate... and a ghost! What?! I did mention "paranormal"! In the heart of Louisiana, Kena has been in hiding... for many, MANY years. Except, she doesn't know she's in hiding. We meet Kena as a police officer in post Hurricane Katrina New Orleans. She's an officer on suspension under suspicion of misconduct while undercover as the girlfriend of Vinny, the Mafia leaders son.

When Hurricane Katrina came through and leveled the town, Vinny's father lost everything. To get his territory back, Vinny's father decided to dabble a bit with the spritit world, which he doesn't understand...and can't control. Powerful spirits get released and it's time for Kena to come out of hiding. What better way than having Luc, your friendly building supervisor to jog your memory!

I thought the synopsis would be what drew me to the book... while the synopsis was interesting, including a beautiful cover, the first couple of lines of the story grabbed me! And it kept me glued to the story. It was funny, it was charming, it was EVERYTHING! The characters, whether main or secondary, were well

developed which made the story that much more compelling. There were scenes that had me in tears from laughing, but also in tears from sorrow. This story broke me down, built me back up, and broke me down again. I felt like I was on a roller coaster of emotions! I love a story that has a strong female lead. Kena was strong on her own, but even stronger with Luc. The love scenes between them were stunning. They were sensual and passionate. I would definitely recommend this to anyone looking for a plot to get wrapped up in, characters to fall in love with, and an awesome read.

The original review was written for The Romance Reviews!

Jen Hawkins says

Fans of Karen Marie Moning will love the storytelling style of Wren Michaels. This book is one of my all-time favorite urban fantasy/paranormal romances.

Here are a few of my favorite things about it (without spoilers!):

1. The main character is a woman of color. Can I just say it's about time urban fantasy/PNR featured more fierce, ass-kicking, problem-solving, confident black women?! Kena is a cop in New Orleans who not only has to wrangle her mobster ex-boyfriend and all of his cronies, but also the supernatural forces embedded in the history (and future) of the city. All the while, she maintains a sharp sense of self and a penchant for hilarious one-liners.
2. Kena's roommate is a Zumba-dancing gay ghost. I realize how crazy that sounds to someone who hasn't read it yet, but trust me: you'll love the shit out of A.J. The author has zero trouble making you believe he's real. You'll want to be BFFs with the guy. I'm legit sad that I can't go grab a beer with him and talk about fashion and philosophy.
3. Luc. OHMYGOD LUC. He is the absolute perfect complement to Kena's strong-willed nature. They're both such bullheaded smartasses, and when their passions reach a fever pitch, whew! Sizzling. (I've never been able to buy into the whole alpha-females-can-only-pair-with-beta-males bullshit. So I really appreciate that the author made these characters equally bold and strong.)
4. The setting. I've been to NOLA several times, and I love it. The sensory details put me right in the middle of Bourbon street, smelling beignets and listening to street jazz. There is something overwhelmingly magical about that city, and it's captured so beautifully in this story. The rich voudou history there is fascinating, and I love that the author took the time to fully research and get the details right.
5. The love story. It's hard to be specific without giving away spoilers, but there is so much torturous push and pull. So much sacrifice. Beyond the paranormal elements, these characters demonstrate what it means to really love someone--even when you want to choke the hell out of them, haha. I thought their banter was refreshingly real, and as the layers of their history were revealed a little at a time, I was desperate for them to find a way to be together.

Five enthusiastic stars.

Erzabet Bishop says

Voodoo, loas and hoodoo hexes. Lots of spice and some very nice scenes make this a great read. I love how the author created the characters and the snark between them. The ghost is the best. Bring on the cookies- you'll get it if you read the book.

Great characters.

Good tension between the characters.

Adventure.

Forbidden love.

PNR.

Great read!

Karen's Bookshelf says

This is my first read by this author which I thoroughly enjoyed. From reading the synopsis I expected a paranormal/fantasy read with a little romance. I got that and so much more.

First you have Kena, who's on suspension from her job as a cop, and she's just trying to bide her time until she can get back to work. Her roommate A.J. has other plans for Kena's time off, which starts with him getting rid of her awful favorite boots. When Kena decides to go dumpster diving for the boots that A.J. threw away she finds way more than her comfort shoes at the bottom of the dumpster.

Luc, comes upon Kena while she's boot searching didn't just happen to be in the right place at the right time by accident. He's so much more than Kena's knight in shinning armor. and when Kena finally figures that out the fun really begins for these two.

This book has a little bit of everything, romance, fantasy, action and drama, the sexy man, and the beautiful woman. Add in some demons, a lot of voodoo, and many otherworldly creatures, and this sets the stage for a wonderful, at times comedic story of fated love that will not be denied. I give it a solid 4.5 stars!

1-Click Addict Support Group says

I'd been wanting to read this since I first learned it was coming. I had read others by this author and loved them. I was not disappointed in what is (I think) the first full length book she's published.

Vexed was full of clever characters. A gay ghost who tosses boots and teaches zumba? Yes, please. An all mighty deity with shag carpet? Don't mind if I do! A kick-ass heroine who does what she wants like a boss? Bring it on. And Luc. Every time I smell cookies now I'll think of his smoldering self.

The long lost, forbidden love through the ages of an immortal life also hit me right in the feels. There was a lot going on, and a lot of smaller characters and names to remember, which I found a little confusing at times. Then, the convenience of some of the plot resolutions was a little anticlimactic, but it was never a disappointment. It was a thrill ride, and I thoroughly enjoyed it. ~ George, 4 stars
