



Deathwish

Rob Thurman

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In a nightmarish new york city, life is there for the taking...

Half-human Cal Leandros and his brother, Niko, are barely getting by with their preternatural detective agency when the vampire Seamus hires them. He's being followed, and he wants to know by whom. But the Leandros brothers have to do more than they had planned when Seamus turns up dead (or un-dead). — Worse still is the return of Cal's nightmarish family, the Auphe. The last time Cal and Niko faced them, the Auphe were almost wiped out. Now they want revenge. Cal knows that before the Auphe get to him, they will try to destroy everything and everyone he holds dear. Because for the Auphe, Cal's pain is a pleasure.

And they're feeling good.

Deathwish Details

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Author : Rob Thurman

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From Reader Review *Deathwish* for online ebook

Cathy says

"Part-time bartender, private investigator/bodyguard/jack-of-all-trades to the nonhuman world, and one suspicious son of a bitch, that was me." Caliban Leandros, p3, a perfect introduction/reminder of who the central character is.

I was really excited to get this next adventure with the Leandros brothers. I love the sardonic tone and dark style of the books. Overall, I was pleased, but it wasn't the best in the series for me. The author experimented by switching back and forth between the 2 brothers' points of view, where the previous books had been exclusively from Cal's perspective. I had mixed feelings about the Niko POV. His voice is not distinct enough for me. If I read out of context I'd have no idea who he was, except for the excessive comments about his loyalty to his brother. When I read Cal chapters, I know I'd recognize him anywhere, from his sayings and word choices and tone, very distinct. On the other hand, it does allow some interesting perspective into Niko's character. On page 125 he questions who he'd be without taking on the responsibility to raise Cal, if he'd have become as broken as his mother. Interesting idea, that our challenges can shape us as much as our advantages.

In addition to the POV issue, there was also a LOT of repetition in the book. It would have been a great drinking game to have to drink every time one of the brothers said they wouldn't want to live without the other, they were loyal to each other, their mother was an evil tramp, or even that Puck was unusually loyal to them. While using the first person POV made this somewhat less annoying, as real people also frequently repeat things over and over in their own heads, in a book it got pretty old.

Yet and still, I did enjoy the book quite a lot. The brothers still interest me and I especially enjoy that the mystical creatures are always quite different from the normal urban fantasy fare.

Kim says

The Cal and Niko Leandros series is one of my favorite urban fantasy series, a fact which owes much to its well-developed characters and the originality of its fantasy world. Mythological stereotypes are turned on their heads---there's a merman here who is a barely humanoid shark, a chupacabra who plays Go Fish, and vampires who (usually) rely upon iron supplements. And I adore the interplay between the two brothers Cal and Niko---they clearly love each other, and *Deathwish* in particular shows how far they will go to protect each other---yet are snarky and smart alecky to each other as brothers often are. And there are supporting characters I love as much as I do the brothers---primarily Robin Goodfellow, yes, that Robin Goodfellow, an unrepentant hedonist and used car salesman. I will always hope that Cal gets together with the psychic, George, but his current love interest, Delilah the werewolf, is also a lot of fun.

Deathwish breaks with the tradition of the earlier books in the series of leaving the narration up to Cal; every other chapter is narrated by Niko. It's interesting to read things from Niko's perspective, not only to see his take on his brother, but also because this book is, in part, about the secret past of his girlfriend Promise. The vampire Seamus hires the Leandros boys to find out who has been following him, and Seamus turns out to be a figure from Promise's past, and not the only one who shows up here, either. . . And then Seamus shows up dead. . . Meanwhile, the Auphe are back, and Cal discovers he is the last (half-)Auphe male, and what they

have planned for him gives new meaning to the phrase "a fate worth than death."

I wouldn't say *Deathwish* is my favorite book in the series, as there were times I got a little confused, maybe because there was so much happening (at times there seemed to be three competing story lines going on) or maybe because of the alternating viewpoints. I've always grudgingly liked the vampire Promise, even though in the past she married, in rapid succession, five very rich very old men, and I'm not crazy about the way Thurman does vampires. Here, Promise really pushes it where I'm concerned, although it's really more like she reveals how she has been pushing it all along. However, learning about the choices Promise has made and the strain they put on her relationship with Niko sheds new light on the message about family that has been running through this series. And although *Deathwish* feels like it could be an ending of sorts, I see on Thurman's website a vague reference to "Cal Leandros Books 5, 6, and 7" so woo hoo! I can't wait!

Rachel says

Not five stars because it's not for everyone -- the angst and vivid archetypes make it seem potentially more juvenile than other novels. But the main characters really resonate for me, the solution to their problem, though inevitable, was daring and somewhat satisfying, and reading the first chapters written from Nik's point of view was much better than I expected. A lot of authors ruin characters by changing to their point of view -- Nik's read like Thurman wrote the chapter from Cal's point of view first, and then rewrote it for Nik without changing anything but the thoughts and perspective of the character. It gives Nik depth and makes him a much less remote character, without destroying the archetype that he's based on. Overall, this may be one of my all-time favorite "read when you're depressed" books, and I totally loved it.

(For those who need plot and stuff, the last book ended with the Auphe reappearing and homing in on Nik and Cal. That apparently wasn't enough plot for this book, so while the Auphe are trying to kill Nik and reveal more nefarious plans for Cal, Promise's daughter (!) appears, trailing a killer from whom she's stolen something irreplaceable, and Robin is sinking into depression after the events in the previous book. It's fascinating that scary as the Auphe are, they're not the real threat in this novel.)

Devann says

I love this series so much! I know it says 'read 2 times' but back in the day pretty much all I did was reread this series over and over so I'm sure the actual number is somewhere closer to ten. This book is the first time we get a POV from Cal's brother Niko and I'm so glad. The first time I read this series it took me awhile to warm up to Niko and this book was when it happened. He seems all stoic on the outside but once you get into his head it's clear that he's just as messed up as Cal is, albeit in slightly different ways.

In addition to getting into Niko's head, we also get a lot of backstory on Promise in this book. I've always loved Promise [and her and Niko's relationship] and there is a lot of focus on that here. By all rights this book should be kind of a mess, there are like three separate plots going on at once when you add in Cherish and the Vigil and the Auphe, but it all works really well together in the end. There are objectively better urban fantasy series out of there but this one will always be my favorite.

Ami says

The fourth book in *Cal Leandros* series breaks my heart in more ways than one. I think it is the most emotional book, the most thoughtful as well, among all books I have read in this series so far.

The 'key' for this is the inclusion of Niko's point of view. For the previous three books, we only get the story from Cal's. But this time, the book has chapters from Cal and Niko. So we get to see how Niko thinks -- we get to see how a moment in their life from different perspectives. In result, the bond between the two brothers is portrayed stronger than ever, and for me personally, more poignant. We also see the relationship of Niko and Promise from the first seat -- since in the previous books, Cal is the one telling us, and he might miss some nuances.

There are more than one scenes in the book that literally make me all choked up and want to wail like a baby. When Niko remembers Sophia handing baby Cal to him, when Niko remembers the days before the nightmare, when Cal struggles to ask Niko to let them go, when Cal erases his tattoo, when Niko thinks Cal die, when Cal writes a note to help Niko deals with his nightmare ... The truth is, they start the life together and if they have to leave the world, it will also be together.

Like I said ... BREAKS. MY. HEART

There are additional characters that also become enemies introduced. There's the return on Samuel (from book #1) and introduction of The Vigil, or the "janitor" that cleans up anything supernatural disaster, also Robin's dead-cat. I don't mind if George disappears for good, I don't see the use of her anyway. Sure she sees the future, but if she is adamant NOT to do anything about it, what's the function of having her. Just let her go. I like Delilah better anyway.

Of course, the heart of the story is still the brothers. And I'll be with them till the end.

Kelly H. (Maybedog) says

This was as good as the first one. I don't know why I find the angst and drama so thrilling but I do. This one actually split perspectives between both brothers in alternating chapters and I really liked it. It was nice to hear Nico's voice and his perspective on the same issues. For the first time we see his reasons for protecting his brother and they make more sense than Cal's. I also like that this one had Nico showing vulnerability and fallibility. He's not always the superhero and since we see his private interactions with Promise in addition to what's in his head, a more rounded figure comes out.

Thurman is one of the few authors in this genre whose work I am familiar with to understand psychological trauma. Something horrible happens and it leaves emotional scars. She understands that horrible neglect and abuse of a child leads to more complexity in an adult other than just being angry and snarky all the time. She points out that Nic was as deeply affected by the abuse but he had a different role to play and a different way of dealing with it. I can relate to him on a personal level. She also realizes that even having one horrific night can leave scars. Just like a 15 minute rape can scar for life, different kinds of brutality and psychological trauma don't go away overnight.

What I love most, though, is people loving each other so much and backing friends so much that they would do anything for them and it isn't about romance or sex. It's about the people themselves, being just good people. And then there's Goodfellow who is my favorite character to emerge from my readings in a very long time. Yum!

I can't get enough of these books and it's awful. I read about 200 times faster than she publishes. I'm trying to pace myself so I don't read them all at once, but most other series I've found pale in comparison when I'm in the mood for action/thriller/drama in the urban fantasy genre.

Adrian Phoenix says

The best one yet and I've loved the previous three. This one just about broke my heart. I'm on to the next book in the series.

Mike (the Paladin) says

I'm in the middle of this...and it's not bad, but it has to go on hold till I finish a couple of library books. I also have a reading group book that may have to be bumped up. I am truly over committed.

Okay.....

if you have followed my reviews of the other books in this series you know that I've given each 3 stars. They are good reads....mostly. I only had a few gripes with them. I'm not much into anti-heroes with angsty, negative, nihilistic outlooks on life. And Cal definitely qualifies for that. Niko isn't quite so bad but he hits one of my other pet peeves. The vampire girl friend, yes the reformed, romantic vampire who manages to get by without hunting humans and controls her "nature". Thurman works this out with her own mythology about vampires (as a lot of modern Urban Fantasy writers do). This gives her the "out" and I live with it, mainly because these have been pretty well written and readable stories.

This one barely kept it's 3 stars. It is (in my humble opinion of course) the weakest of the set. Believe it or not it manages to be a sort "touchy feely" monster killing book. We also get a replay of the main villains faced early on in the series and some "almost" cliches in the plot. (Some will disagree with me in this description as the "creatures" in question are a sort "negative take" on elves. But I found them cliched in that they are "the" almost invulnerable, "undefeatable", super villain opponent.)

I spotted most of the "surprise" plot twist early on...that may be a sort of compliment however as Ms. Thurman all but pointed a finger a couple of times, while crying "look here, look here".

Avoiding spoilers can be annoying can't it...oh well.

I didn't care for her "shifting" point of view in this book. Chapters alternate between the two brothers though they are usually together and the only point seems to be to let us in on the angst of each one and maybe to let us see how each thinks. Unfortunately there are times when the two voices seem to be almost identical... not always but occasionally.

I'll probably continue to follow any sequels that may follow this one... I think it picked up a bit near the end. And, in spite of my criticisms I enjoyed it fairly well. Good urban fantasy is hard to find and these fall securely into the slot between "good" and "not bad" so..3 stars.

Summer says

So in Deathwish, Cal and Niko are having almost as many personal problems as their usual problems. Cal discovers that he can create gates now without even trying. Promise introduces the brothers to an old vampire friend of hers named Seamus for a job. Seamus seems to believe he's being followed, but even with his vampire-heightened senses he can't seem to pinpoint by who. Niko and Promise's relationship is put on rocky status when Promise also turns out to be a not-so-proud mother of a vampire daughter. Niko doesn't mind Promise being a mother. He does however have a problem with the fact that Promise completely omitted huge parts of her life to him. Omitting the truth is pretty close to a lie to Niko, and someone who lies is someone Niko can't trust. Promise's daughter not only causes trouble with their relationship, turns out she's also stolen something from a powerful being and he's headed their way. The Auphe are still chasing the brothers too. There's only so many problems the brothers can handle before one of them begins to crack.

FINALLY we get every other chapter told from Niko's POV. I really enjoyed those chapters and it didn't decrease my undying love for him. It was interesting seeing Cal and the other characters thorough his eyes. I don't want to give too much away, but I do have to say poor Niko. Poor Cal too, but this time it's Niko's turn and that was pretty sad. I loved it though, can't wait to read the next one.

Always Reading says

Ich finde es so unfassbar schade, dass die Cal Leandros-Reihe im Mittelteil immer so langweilig und langatmig ist. Die Ideen sind genau mein Geschmack, eine bunte Mischung aus verschiedenen Kulturen und Mythologien. Die Charaktere sind vielseitig und unfassbar realistisch gezeichnet. Action, Humor, Spannung, Tiefgründigkeit, Entwicklung ... alles was ich bei einem guten Buch zu schätzen weiß. Aber, irgendwie gibt es in jedem Teil über hundert Seiten die sich ziehen wie Kaugummi; die Protagonisten treten auf der Stelle oder sind zu stur um das Problem zu erkennen.

Gäbe es diese extreme Durststrecke nicht, wären diese Bücher verdammte Meisterwerke (für mich). Rob Thurman hat es einfach drauf, wenn es darum geht die menschliche Psyche auseinanderzunehmen. Sie zeigt wie individuell jeder einzelne ist, auf welchen Ebenen die verschiedensten Beziehungen und Ereignisse unser Leben verändern, verbessern oder zerstören können. Wie sehr man manchmal auf andere angewiesen ist, wie sehr man manchmal alleine sein muss. Dass es gewisse Dinge gibt, die man einfach nur für sich selbst tun muss.

Ich bin immer wieder erstaunt wie gut und logisch die Beziehung der Brüder geschrieben ist. Es wirkt nicht übertrieben oder naiv, es ist die logische Konsequenz der gemeinsamen Vergangenheit. Der Anfang, das Ende und einige Passagen im Mittelteil sind hervorragend, doch dann kommen diese extremen Durststrecken. Diese sind nicht langweilig oder irgendwas negatives, aber die Autorin setzt sich selbst die Messlatte immer selbst so hoch, dass es einfach nichts im Vergleich zu diesen fantastischen Passagen/Szenen ist.

3,5/5 Sternen

Jason says

3.5 Stars

Deathwish book 4 in the Cal Leandros series by Rob Thurman is another solid addition to the series. Solid is a good word for all of these Urban Fantasy delights. They are consistently engaging, fun, and we'll executed. In this outing the brothers find themselves chased by the Auphe...again. They also put themselves in harms way as they work a case involving a large hunter who has some really nasty cats.

Again, is clearly the word that describes quite a bit of this book. We have been down these very same roads many times now. We have heard the same conversations again and again. We have even seen some of the same outcomes as before. This all sounds like it would make this a bad book, but it simply made things feel very familiar.

I did have some issues with the changes of the point of view but only because of my preferences, not because it was bad or tough to follow. The action like in all of these books is solid and fun and contain enough blood and gore to keep me wanting more. There are several key character and story changes that occur that will move this series in a great direction.

A solid urban fantasy read...

Nicole says

These just keep getting better. This one really pulled me in.

At first, I wasn't sure I would like the chapters alternating Cal's and Niko's points of view, because the previous 3 books have been from Cal's POV (aside from the Darkling business in book 1, but that was filtered through Cal) and I'm very fond of Cal. However, I ended up liking the structure a lot. Finally, we got to see what really makes Niko tick, why he does what he does, how truly fierce his love for his brother is, what kind of damage he's sustained during his life, what he fears.

Cal is more heartbreaking and sarcastic than ever in this one and does some disturbingly surprising things.

The plot is impressive--peril upon danger upon complication, almost an everything-but-the-kitchen-sink approach, but it works. I could hardly read fast enough in the time allowed to get through it.

Cherish is...well, I won't spoil it beyond saying "yikes."

Good urban fantasy adventure with real emotion.

Temaris says

Deathwish is Thurman really hitting her stride. The story is smoother and less confused than the previous three: this is probably because it's the first one that wasn't based on something else. Cal has finally grown up some, and Niko gets it, and that in itself drains a lot of the criticism I had of the previous book.

I guessed the Auphe arc fairly early in the book, but that did not in any way lessen it -- the author rather neatly has Niko guess it about at the same time, without explicitly saying what it is, which works both for the

reader who guesses it and the reader who doesn't ::g::

I'll admit I'm an absolute sucker for the kind of event that happens in the last couple of chapters -- I'll avoid spoilers, but wow, talk about your bullet proof emotional buttons ::g:: -- so I'll just say that I wasn't expecting it, any part of it, though I really should. I dismissed the second arc as not relevant to the guys, very much as they did, and the bite back on that was brilliant. Nice piece of rug-pulling :-)

Admittedly, considering the events of the previous book, I'm assuming that I won't get this again. On the other hand, the theme -- the deathwishes of the various characters, and how those play out -- isn't going to go away. I do kind of hope it's been sufficiently explored for now, because at the moment, it doesn't trip over into melodrama. Much more, and I don't know taht I could say that. I suspect for some people it is already past the melodrama line -- I have a high tolerance for this sort of angst :-)

Erin *Proud Book Hoarder* says

"People on Dr. Phil have issues. We have atomic-powered, demon-flavored, fresh-from-the-pits-of-hell, full-blowing fucking neuroses. Freud would've been in a corner sucking his thumb after one session with us."

I've now read four books in this series, and the same issue remains for me. It's a unique series that offers a different groove of Urban Fantasy tropes: male lead; two brothers fighting against the world; a dark, demented elfish race; lack of strong romantic interest for the male lead; no supernatural powers for the lead. Despite all these interesting changes compared to other books I've read in the same genre, my interest - while there - will only stay there on an average level. Again I'm not sure of the issue because the book checks off some positive points.

First, the writing is well-done. Rob Thurman injects sarcastic humor in the internal monologue and convincing dialogue while still keeping it gritty and dark. The style is almost choppy but it keeps things flowing without much lag or issue.

Characters are well-done - Cal stands out as the loner of the group dragged through life with his brothers support, worried about the darkness inside taking over the good, appreciating (and probably only surviving) because of his brothers faith in him. Niko is a favorite of many readers, but for me in the previous books he's almost two one-dimensional bad-ass goody-two-shoes. That changed a little in this installment since Thurman decided to evenly alternate chapter POV. Now I could be inside his head and, while he's still a little one-dimensional, he comes across sympathetic. Unfortunately switching point of views like that isn't my preferred method - I prefer either first-person all the way or third person.

Promise is an interesting sort for a vampire but nothing not seen or done before. Robin is always a laugh as a puck who drinks, orgies and does what good pucks do. His humor and admitted cowardice is a welcome opposite of Niko's no-nonsense full battle and honor approach.

Villains are always nasty and where the dark stuff seeps in. I can picture the world as dark and bluesy kind of like Gotham city in the Batman mythos. You know it's not a light, fun and shiny place they live in. From the smoke-laded and werewolf-frequented bars Cal works in, to the underground tunnels and creepy water borders and deep in the museum with the monsters, darkness reigns.

The Auphe are creepy and the author keeps introducing different cycles without dragging the storyline out. In the first book they loomed at the high danger when young Cal is absorbed into their earth's gate and escapes, and the second follows them to the new city and life. They popped up as a cliffhanger at the end of the third after a major battle, but it looks like some survived for a different kind of stand in the fourth book.

The story is intriguing and the pacing okay, but my interest ultimately hovers at a three stars "I like it" rating. I think some of the issue is the story is feeling a little repetitive now - Cal has kept the same issues for all the books, much of the same dialogue exchanges between him and Niko on not giving it up, they are still battling monsters for money and survival in the same environment.

Μάρσα Γεωργοπούλου says

Niko, Cal, Goodfellow...

You can see the following review also here: <http://loveandlivetoread.wordpress.co...>

I'm trying to write this review for a while, but it's not easy. Why? Because I absolutely loved this book and I believe that five stars are not enough! I knew that I was going to love this book when I saw that it has POVs from both brothers! I was expecting to read Niko's POV since I read the first book and I was not disappointed. Like the previous books, it's dark, non-stop action and full of sarcasm and it kept my interest from the very first page until the last!

Once more, Cal and Niko have to deal with more than one threats but, of course, they have the help of friends and lovers. But this time the danger for their lives is bigger...

What I loved more in these books is that the author really knows what she's doing. Cal and Niko are more than brothers because it's not only the blood bound that connects them. Their terrible childhood in a house with a more than a bitch of a mother, made them realize that they are together against the world. It's not good that a four years old little child takes an oath to protect a newborn baby. All children must have parents to protect them. So, it's only logical that Cal and Niko have a very unique relationship.

Cal is definitely more mature and better at fighting. I enjoy his sarcasm and the way he is with his friends. I still have a problem with his decision for his love life. I just can't understand how he can't be with the woman he truly loves. I understand that as a man he needs to get laid but I don't like that he's not with George.

Niko, as I've said before, is my favorite. He is a disciplined person but with a great sense of humor. In this story he had a hard time because of the woman he loves. First she lies to him and then her daughter is trying to kill both him and his brother. Of course, he doesn't react well to that. I understand why Niko puts Cal before everyone else but that is very hard for his other relationships.

But I have to words that made this book even better: Goodfellow and Salome! I loved that he was swearing in Greek (I am from Greece and I have to tell you that he knew what he was talking about!) and that now he has a mummified cat as a pet!!!

So, this is a great series and I want to read the next books also!
