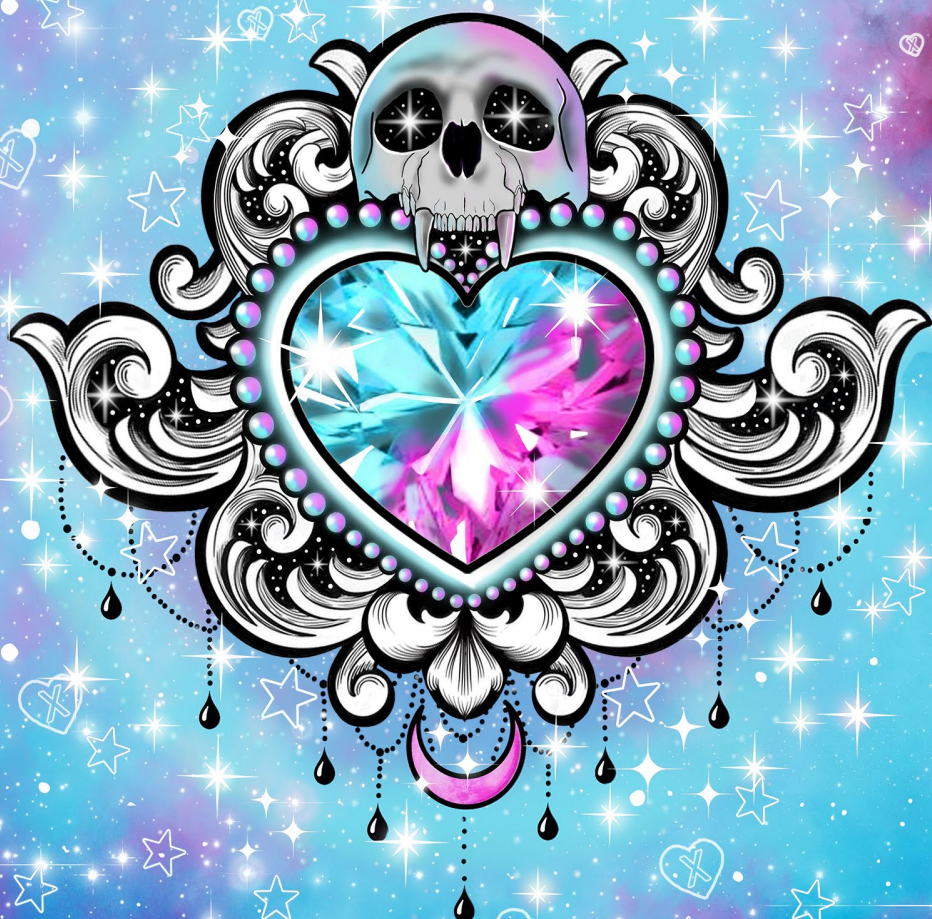


CROSS MY WEREWOLF HEART



ESTHER DEL ZUANNE

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For my mum, Paola.

*Everyday, in every way, I'm grateful you're my mama.
Everything I am, is either from you (genetics...yay!) or because
of you.*

*You raised me to be confident, creative and kind, and showed me
it was okay to be different. You taught me to follow my instincts
and instilled in me the unwavering belief that I could do
anything and everything I wanted (and I really wanted to write
this book).*

*So, Mutti, my darling Fluffikins,
this one—the first one—is for you.*

•

*In loving memory of my father, Antonio, and my uncle, Barry.
Always loved. Always remembered. Always in our hearts.*

Series Overview

In the Cross My Werewolf Heart trilogy, Digital Content Manager, Clarissa Hunt's life takes an unexpected turn when she awakens in a body bag after a bizarre accident claims her life. But death is just the beginning of her wild journey.

Tasked with unraveling the mystery of her newfound immortality, Clarissa finds herself thrust into a supernatural world teeming with werewolves, ancient secret societies, and perilous enemies determined to end her life, for good.

As she navigates Melbourne's paranormal underbelly, Clarissa's sense of humor becomes her most valuable asset.

Amidst the chaos, she finds herself caught between a ruggedly handsome yet abrasive stranger, and a charming and alluring doctor, both vying for her romantic attention.

A tale filled with twisty turns, mayhem and mystery, Cross My Werewolf Heart, will have you turning pages faster than xxx, and leave you breathless with anticipation.

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Prepare to be enthralled by this fast-paced paranormal romantic comedy set against the backdrop of Melbourne, Australia.

With a comedic flair and a contemporary tone, Cross My Werewolf Heart blends otherworldly shenanigans with laugh-out-loud moments, providing readers with a captivating and entertaining tale.

Join Clarissa on her hilarious and perilous adventure as she confronts monsters, uncovers ancient secrets, and discovers that even in the face of danger, laughter can be the ultimate weapon.

If you love reading Robyn Peterman, MaryJanice Davidson, Cynthia St. Aubin, Carrie Pulkinen and Janet Evanovich, you'll adore sinking your teeth into Esther Del Zuanne's, debut series, Cross My Werewolf Heart.

Cross My Werewolf Heart

“If I’d known I was going to die today, I’d have worn nicer underwear.”

—Clarissa Hunt, Cross My Werewolf Heart

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As if dying in a humiliating ice hockey mishap and waking up in a body bag wasn’t traumatic enough, adjusting to life in a post-resurrection world is an even bigger nightmare.

Not only am I dodging a litany of paranormal beasts determined to end me for good, but my home is getting trashed more often than a Motley Crüe hotel room, my father is threatening to sue every medical practitioner in the southern hemisphere, and I’m dealing with a swath of shiny new paranormal abilities that include understanding werewolves when they, erm, speak...and smelling human emotions.

PS: yuck.

My survival—and sanity—hinge on figuring out how I came back from the dead, and why.

You’d think my situation might have improved when I stumbled across the Patrons of Order—the super-secret organization dedicated to maintaining the fragile balance between humanity and the seething supernatural realm on our doorstep.

But it didn’t. In fact, my life has gone from bad to worse...and worse again.

Instead of providing answers, the Patrons only throw up more questions, confusion and lies, leaving me no closer to solving the twisty mystery surrounding my inability to die.

Of course, it hasn’t all been doom and gloom. Hanging out with charismatic surgeon, Steven Nash, (have I mentioned his dazzling baby-blues? #swoon), and paranormal peacekeeper, Sonny Jones—he of the smoldering good-looks and pecs of steel—hasn’t exactly been a struggle.

Now, if I could just stop all the werewolf attacks and solve the mystery of my new-found immortality, getting back to normal life would be sooooo much easier.

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Cross My Werewolf Heart is the first book in a fast-paced, raucously funny, and wildly unpredictable trilogy featuring sassy Digital Content Manager, Clarissa Hunt, and set in the fantastical world of #fangsfurandfreaks

But, be warned, there’s a juicy cliffhanger at the end and, just like potato chips, you won’t be able to stop at just one!

DISCLAIMER



G'day!

Just a quick note to let you know that, despite being published in USAmerican English, this book contains lots of fun Australian content. It's written by an Australian author, featuring (mostly) Australian characters and is set in Melbourne, Australia.

There are plenty of Aussie turns of phrase, references to Australian celebrities, sporting heroes, retail stores, and places that may be unfamiliar to readers who have never lived in, or visited Australia. These are integral aspects of the story and contribute to its unique charm and fresh flavour (yep, that's flavour with a U #winkwink).

I sincerely hope you enjoy this wild trip Down Under.

ONE



IF I'D KNOWN I was going to die today, I'd have worn nicer underwear. Seriously, no one should have to draw their final breath wearing flesh-toned granny panties with busted elastic and dubious staining on the crotch.

How embarrassing.

But, don't judge, okay? It was laundry day and in my defense, it's not like I knew it was going to be *the* day.

Then again, who does?

Why was I even thinking about underwear, anyway? I was dead, for pity's sake. Well, I had been dead. Judging by the way my monitor *beep, beep, beeped* in time with my heartbeat—the EKG dancing to its jaunty rhythm—it seemed I was very much alive...again.

I pinched the bridge of my nose and tried to remember back to the previous night. Or was it the night before? No idea. Memory has never really been my strong point; it's sketchy at best. Add concussion, a heavy-duty sedative, and the remnants of what I can only assume was rigor mortis to the mix and apparently I can barely remember what was shaping up to be the worst day of my life, or my death, for that matter.

I'm sure the orderly who'd been wheeling my body from the morgue down to the basement would totally back me up, too. There he'd been, halfway through his shift, humming *Bad Moon Rising*—not very well, might I add—as he wheeled his corpse du jour (aka: me) down to the loading bay, where undertakers were waiting to transfer said corpse to their facility for “preparation” (for those of us not in the know, preparation means embalming and other gross stuff—#shudder), assuming, and quite rightly so, that the body in the bag wouldn't be sitting bolt upright on the gurney any time soon.

Of course, that's exactly what I did. I also gasped, flailed like one of those inflatable tube thingies you see in front of car dealerships, and howled for someone to LET ME OUT!

When I eventually wrestled myself out of the bag (QUESTION: why do they even have zip tags *inside* body bags? Do people come back to life often? Is it a *thing*?) I thought the poor orderly had an aneurysm or something because he was slumped in the corner of the freight elevator, eyes shut tight, chest heaving, all the color drained from his face.

When he opened his eyes and looked directly into mine, I don't know who screeched louder.

Actually, I do.

It wasn't me.

The day I died had started out much the same as any other: work, work, a couple of rowdy cocktails over lunch with the girls at Luna Bar, a spot of shopping at Highpoint, followed by a ride home in an Uber because I discovered that my car had been stolen from the shopping mall car park (that's a whooooole other story), which left me feeling less than stellar. I was going to stay home, eat my body weight in donuts and binge watch *Grey's Anatomy* (because who doesn't need an ugly cry every now and again?), but it was the AIHL season opener, Melbourne Mustangs (woo!) vs Sydney Bears at O'Brien Ice House in South Wharf, and my cousin Drew insisted I go with him... You know, to lift my spirits (and because he'd already booked me a ticket).

I should have stayed home, because if I had, I wouldn't have had to endure my rather humiliating hockey-related mishap that involved getting beaned in the side of the head by an errant puck. It wouldn't have been half as humiliating if I were, in fact, playing.

But I wasn't.

I was spectating.

I don't actually remember dying, per se; that's a little hazy, but I do remember the blinding pain when the puck slammed into my skull, and the beer and nachos I'd been carrying flying everywhere as I fell head over tail down the stairs—I'd just been on a second-period snack run when the errant slap shot by (THAT SHOULD HAVE BEEN A GOAL) ricocheted off the crossbar and over the safety glass straight into the side of my face. I toppled down the concrete stairs and landed with a sickening *crunch* at bottom.

Next thing I knew, I was in a body bag, screaming bloody murder and scaring the bejesus out of the poor orderly, who no doubt will need therapy for *EVER* after this.

Like I said: Worst. Day. Ever.

After an Academy Award-worthy dummy spit on my part, complete with biting, kicking, and a left-right-left hook combo that

would put Evander Holyfield to shame, the poor nurse I'd slugged introduced me to my new best friend, Prince Valium, and I was officially in love. My extreme, albeit justified, agitation pretty quickly made way for something much more pleasant; a kind of soft, fluffy haze that was not unlike being enveloped in a cozy blankie on a chilly winter's day.

In my defense, I think I acted the way anyone who'd just risen from the dead would have. I did feel bad for punching the nurse, though. In hindsight, she didn't deserve that.

Anyhoo, that's how I found myself tucked away in a private room on the fifth floor of the Royal Melbourne Hospital—out of sight and far, far away from other patients and visitors...and the morgue, much to my relief.

The hospital was doing its darndest to keep a close eye on me and make sure I didn't relapse and die all over again. I think they were just trying to make sure they didn't get slapped with a massive malpractice claim if it turned out that they'd completely ballsed up my treatment, which looking at it objectively, they probably did.

We were at crossed purposes though, because they were hell-bent on keeping me in the damn hospital, and all I wanted to do was get the hell out.

There was a slight problem with that, though. Actually, there were several, but the most pressing was a certain lack of acceptable clothing on my part. I mean, I did have the super-stylish hospital gown they'd given me, but not before everyone in the ER had seen my goodies because, of course, I was pretty much naked when I emerged hissing and screeching from the body bag. Did I mention my crazy hair? *Urgh*.

Why were hospital gowns open at the back, anyway? Is it really that critical for medical professionals to have clear and immediate access to my butt? Was my bottom really in that much imminent danger?

And don't get me started on the weird paper undies they'd given me. I'm pretty sure they were made of coarse-grade sand- paper, fire ants, and the tears of orphans, because what else could possibly feel more uncomfortable? They were so rough, they practically vaporized my poor huhu.

I'd never missed my flesh-toned granny panties with the busted elastic and dubious staining on the crotch more than I did at that moment.

Want more?

[Grab your copy of Cross My Werewolf Heart in paperback or ebook from your favourite store now!](#)