



Pure Magic

Rachel Neumeier

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Sequel to Black Dog, this a Paranormal with a real bite - for readers who loved Maggie Stiefvater's Shiver trilogy.

After Natividad, Alejandro, and Miguel's victory against their family's rival, even more dangerous threats emerge, from an increase in stray black dogs to far worse opponents who would tear down the fragile Dimiloc alliance and re-make it in their own image.

Story Locale: Post-vampire/werewolf war USA.

Series Overview: Three siblings escape Mexico to rejoin their father's Black Dog (werewolf) clan in a future still recovering from the vampire/black dog wars. Natividad is pure, a sorceress whose power can calm the Black Dogs. The three struggle to find a new home for themselves as warring Black Dog clans vye for supremacy.

Publication date to be announced

Pure Magic Details

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Author : Rachel Neumeier

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From Reader Review Pure Magic for online ebook

Tadiana ☆Night Owl? says

Intense! And perhaps one should have suspected that not *all* of the vampires in America had been exterminated...

Review to come.

All Things Urban Fantasy says

BLACK DOG was my favorite book of 2014, and **PURE MAGIC** is everything I could have hoped for in a sequel. The black dogs of this world are a little darker, a littler more demonic than Urban Fantasy's usual shapeshifters. With sulfur and fire and violence in their hearts, they flow up through the human body, and burst into our world.

As promised in the title, **PURE MAGIC** focuses on the protective arts Natividad used in BLACK DOG. And with the introduction of Justin, a Pure boy with no concept of his own magic, readers have a new chance to learn about the "aggressively defensive" power that lives alongside all the violence of the black dogs. Though there are several instances where great peril is answered by spontaneous leaps in magical skill, the geometry of Pure magic and the ballet of Ezekiel whirling in and out of human form make these battles a visual delight. While I don't normally hope for movie adaptations, the characters and magic of the *Black Dog* world would be a pleasure in yet another medium.

Natividad and Ezekiel's story is what made me anxious to read more of the Black Dog series, and Neumeier delivered them and several other surprises as well. By the end I felt empathy for Grayson (a growly version of Giles, futilely trying to direct superhuman teens and all their impulsive power), grew to admire Keziah, and want so desperately to know more about the youngest black dogs of the pack. Like the best of worlds, every taste of this series just makes me hungry for more.

Sexual Content: A non-explicit sex scene, references to sex.

MB (What she read) says

3.5 stars

I love this series, but Natividad's naive impetuousness really bugged me in this. I get that she's only 16, but still! I *know* she understands that the danger is real--and she's certainly experienced the consequences--so I just couldn't wrap my mind around the fact that she chose to do such stupid things. Yes, #1, she meant well, and yes, #2, it advanced the plot, BUT she was needlessly stupid and put others in danger. I kept bumping my head against that.

I did think the ending was intriguing, and sets up the next book to head in an interesting direction.

A rumination:

As always, I think it is interesting how Neumeier handles the interactions between the characters. I think the

way power and dominance is done between the male characters is really interesting. I wonder if it comes out of a Hispanic cultural background? This aspect and the way Neumeier writes it is quite unusual and I don't think I've come across anything similar. So far, it hasn't become squicky which I've been a little worried about. (i.e. "Power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely.") With power, there's a very fine line/tipping point between control and abuse, so... So far, it's handled well and creatively, hopefully this series can keep up that fine balance.

Mouselet says

If I prefer Pure Magic to Black Dog, it's because Justin is a much more sympathetic protagonist. He's a good reader-insert character because the poor boy had no idea about the world he now finds himself in with Pure and black dogs and vampires and all of this crazy stuff. Especially since who's ever heard of a Pure boy?

But what sets Pure Magic apart from run-of-the-mill young adult books is how Neumeier handles exactly what I hate most about Natividad. Like any stereotypical young adult protagonist, the fifteen year old girl believes she knows better than everyone around her. And, being Pure and somewhat spoiled, she knows she can convince people to do what she wants and get away with it. However, this can cause problems. Big ones. Which are entirely her fault. And now she and her family and friend must live with the consequences of her actions...if they can survive them.

Where the first book was a fight for survival, Pure Magic is a journey of discovery. And also a smaller fight for survival. It's an enjoyable and relatable read for adults of all ages.

Yune says

This is the self-published sequel to *Black Dog* -- there's also a collection of short stories, straightforwardly titled *Black Dog Short Stories*, that falls between the two chronologically, but I'd call the first novel required reading, and the short stories very nice to have (recommended on their own merit) but not a must. Even though a new character is introduced at the start, someone clueless about the world of black dogs, Justin isn't much of a guide for a newbie reader; he's thrown into violent trouble right away, then rescued so brusquely by the Dimilioc that it might as well be called kidnapping, with explanations for the craziness he just witnessed either lacking or oblique.

The Dimilioc are one of the black dog houses that protect the Pure -- the few people who share black dog genetic traits, but don't have a black dog's shadow, and can in fact help others keep their shadows in rein. (I'm a little sad that the title will lose so much of its meaning for folks who don't have this context. Also, see the aforementioned story collection for a swoon-worthy explanation of the genetics involved.) But for Justin, this protection takes the form of virtual imprisonment. As in *Black Dog*, conflict gets kicked up when the Pure stubbornly refuse to stay put, although for good reason (if you give the characters some allowance for their age).

I was initially disappointed not to revisit my favorite characters right away, but I quickly grew to like Justin, and by the end wished there had been more of him. It was refreshing to see his perspective on old characters: Ethan felt more likable, while Natividad's carefully cultivated cheerfulness (to provide an upbeat note amidst all the black dog tension) became a little startling. And he brought a mathematical approach to Pure magic, which immediately won me over. For him, Keziah's the most fraught member of the Dimilioc because of the possibilities he represents -- a way for a black dog woman to bear viable children -- as much as her prickly

demeanor, but there's also natural speculation about the other opportunities a Pure male represents.

In general, I'm happy with Neumeier's take on werewolves because of the balance it strikes between practicality and indulgence. There are some paranormal romances that will lay on the alpha dominance and mate schtick with heaviness worthy of an anvil, but here it feels like genuine culture, established by need and, well, good story. (There would be less fun in werewolves with ironclad control.) And the modern world, which felt a bit more distant in the first book, encroaches here with the media and the military, although not so much as to steal the story's focus.

Natividad and Ezekiel fans will probably be happy with one particular scene, and be left on tenterhooks by another. Neumeier doesn't linger on the romance arc, but she gave decent weight to their confusion of feelings; I was left convinced that there's a solid base for a relationship between the two, although circumstances were foremost responsible for bringing them together. There was one scene where Ezekiel's appearance almost made me cheer out loud, especially given that the characters spend a lot of time in separate places.

I was relieved to hear that Neumeier's planning more books and short stories in this series. This book struck me as particularly well-rounded, with each character given at least some of the spotlight, but it left me wishing that there'd been even more of each.

Andrea says

This is one of those action-filled stories that you bolt down in great gulps, racing to get through it to find out what happens, sneaking a page or two at every opportunity. And, happily, coming out satisfied on the other side.

I particularly enjoyed Jason's tendency to tell people to stop posturing and get to the point. Someone raised outside the Black Dog environment is a breath of fresh air.

I spent a lot of time wanting to strangle Natividad, and hope she finds a way of handling crises that doesn't involve (view spoiler). And I appreciated the way the human world is starting to react to the situation.

And now I guess I will wait impatiently for the next volume.

Fangs for the Fantasy says

While Natividad and her family have found security with Dimilioc and managed to defeat the Black Dog that tore their family apart and killed their parents, they are not safe

The world has changed – in the aftermath of the war with the vampires, Dimilioc is left weakened and surrounded by enemies. Her sanctuary is far from secure and the werewolves are beset on all sides: vampires, rogue Black Dogs and even a suspicious human government all

And it's into this difficult world that Justin enters – Pure but with no knowledge of the supernatural world he's part of and he's not sure what to think of the savage monsters who are “offering” protection... whether he want it or not.

I do love this world setting. The whole concept of the vampires and the war with the werewolves is one that has been done before – but there are many more unique elements to it. The idea that vampires and their mind control managed to hide the supernatural – and with them dead and almost extinct that removes this “Miasma” and exposes all supernatural to humanity. The war against vampires quickly became a war between humans and Black Dogs as the more brutal and savage Black Dog organisations found themselves hunted down as the vampires were

Which leaves the Dimilioc, who value the Pure and try to behave in a civilised fashion without leaving a trail of bodies behind in a difficult position attacked from several sides: the remaining vampires still plot, they’re very understrength after the war, Black Dogs driven out from other countries trying to wipe them out are looking to carve their own territory out of Dimilioc line and, on top of that, the awkward and tentative peace with the human government and a population that is primed to fight after destroying the vampires who are not exactly on the Dimilioc’s side.

This whole, complex world is told excellently through the story. We get to address all of these and make them all work into the story without the story feeling overstuffed or with too many crowded elements which is a challenge in and of itself

At the same time it manages to be a very personal story of Natividad and Justin which is also excellent since both of them shows this world from very different angles. Natividad has always been very much in the supernatural community, even when hiding from it – which gives her a clear view on the world, vampires and Dimilioc. While Justin has lived his entire life as a human so has much less rose-tinted glasses (and much more ignorant view point) to look upon the monstrous Black Dogs. Together they bring a complete picture of the world.

This also really delves into the power of the Pure, their magic, their skills and their role in the world, Black Dog culture and the war against vampires.

I can’t emphasise enough how much is packed into this story – world building, character development, personal stories and so much more. But none of it FEELS full. The book isn’t super-long. It doesn’t feel distracted or overwhelmed or slow – there’s a lot there and I get all this experience and knowledge but don’t feel bombarded. It’s really well written

One thing that hasn’t improved is Natividad’s decision making. Aie aie aie, Natividad if you keep this up we’re going to have to rename the Clary award. I like this character, I want to like her more but my gods if she is not just the poster child for Spunky Agency!

Like most classic Spunky Agency, Natividad is an excellent challenge to the dictatorial commands of the pack leader, Grayson. It’s clear throughout the book and the series that you do what the pack leader says Or Else. I’m not actually sure what “or else” means because while he’s certainly arrogant and unwilling to accept any challenge, Grayson isn’t unreasonable. However, Natividad recognises that, as a Pure, all of that “Or Else” pretty much doesn’t apply to her – and it’s quite refreshing to see the oh-so-common alpha male werewolf commander being questioned and openly ignored by a woman while everyone else must leap to obey.

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Rebecca says

I've been looking forward to Pure Magic's release since last year. Really happy to finally get my hands on it.

Okay, some thoughts.

I saw some reviews that said that Justin's introduction made the start of the book really slow, but I never really felt that. I think maybe coz I've been reading too many slow books. The minute I started reading, it was easy to just continue. I didn't want to put it down at all. I think it's partly coz there's Ezekiel.

I liked the second half a lot more, because there was a lot of tension and danger. I *loved* reading about all the scenes between Ezekiel and Natividad. You have to give it to the author; Natividad is underage - but the author makes it work. Their relationship is a lot more believable here than in the previous book, there is more genuine/real attraction between the two of them in this book than in the previous. In the previous book, it was a bit like instalove. In this one, their relationship seems more equal, more healthy. Or at least, they both behave like they know what they're doing and this is what they both want.

Also, there seems to be a parallel between Keziah/Justin and Ezekiel/Natividad. I liked Amira's story in this book. I also like Justin. A bit sad that Miguel didn't have a bigger role. He was great in the first book.

Anyway, I actually really loved reading the book. Can't wait to read the next installment.

Chachic says

Originally posted at Chachic's Book Nook.

Urban fantasy YA novel *Black Dog* by Rachel Neumeier was one of my favorite reads last year. I have been eagerly anticipating the sequel right after I finished reading that book. So when Rachel offered to send me a review copy of *Pure Magic* in ebook format, I enthusiastically said yes. I didn't waste any time and jumped right in. Thankfully, I still remembered most of the story from the first book and didn't have to do a reread prior to picking up *Pure Magic*. The books need to be read in order so read *Black Dog* first before venturing into *Pure Magic*. There's also a set of short stories that occurs between the first and second book. I won't mention spoilers but feel free to skip this review if you haven't read the earlier books yet.

I liked being back in the world that Rachel Neumeier created in her urban fantasy series. Where some men and women can shift into these ferocious and aggressive creatures called black dogs, similar to wolves. And where there are also people like Natividad, who are Pure and can create a defensive form of magic mostly used for peace and protection against evil. I think the first book did a good job of laying out the foundation for the worldbuilding and this sequel builds upon that. I liked seeing more of Natividad's magic and how creative she can get within the limitations of what she can do. Because of the nature of her magic, Natividad has a quiet strength that shines through when the people she cares about are in danger. I think it's impressive how a normally unobtrusive kind of magic becomes crucial in certain situations. I really liked that the Pure have their own kind of power and the focus of the story shifts between the Pure and black dogs. That is not to say that humans don't play an important role in this world because they do, as illustrated by Natividad's twin, Miguel. Even without special powers, Miguel significantly contributes to helping Dimilioc in its efforts to rebuild the clan. A big part of why I enjoy this series is the characters. Aside from Natividad and her brothers, I also liked the various members of the Dimilioc clan, not the least of which is their executioner, Ezekiel. I found the early chapters of the book a bit slow because of the introduction of a new main character and narrator, Justin, but it was soon revealed how he was important to the story so I didn't mind. Like with

the rest of the characters, I just wanted to find out more about him.

While I did feel that *Pure Magic* had a bit of a slow start, the climax builds really nicely until you reach a point where the characters are in situations where the odds are seemingly impossible. The stakes are high and there's only so much that the Dimilioc black dogs and Pure can do. It makes for an absorbing read. I was glad I picked this up on a weekend and I didn't have to worry about work getting in the way of my reading time. I was worried about the characters and I wanted everyone to find a way out of the difficulties they found themselves in. The book doesn't end on a cliffhanger but keep in mind that there will be more installments in the series and some of the future plot arcs have been nicely set up in *Pure Magic*. There's a more global view of the black dog world in this book as compared to the first one, where we mostly saw the focus in the Americas - North America where the Dimilioc strength lies and also Mexico because that's where Natividad and her brothers grew up. My review of *Pure Magic* will not be complete if I didn't mention the slow burn romance. There was just a hint of it in the first book and I immediately wanted A LOT MORE. More scenes with these two potential lovebirds, more dialogue and conversation, and a better idea of what they thought of each other. *Pure Magic* does not disappoint! I really savored this aspect of the story, although I certainly wouldn't have minded if these two had more page time in the book. There were too many things happening for them to have a quiet time together. I can always hope for that in the next novel, which I already can't wait to read even if it hasn't even been written yet! Similar to *Black Dog*, *Pure Magic* was a very satisfying read and I recommend it to fans of YA urban fantasy.

Laura (Kyahgirl) says

3/5; 3 stars; B

While I didn't like this book as much as book 1, *Black Dog*, it was still a good story. The main character, Natividad really annoyed me on several occasions and there were too many convenient times when she pulled a rabbit out of the hat and saved the day, but I am still interested in this world Neumeier has created.

Brandy Painter says

4.5 stars

Originally posted here at [Random Musings of a Bibliophile](#).

Black Dog by Rachel Neumeier was one of my favorite books of last year. I basically wanted the sequel from the moment I closed the book. When its publisher, Strange Chemistry, closed its doors, I knew a moment of panic that I would never see it. Fortunately Rachel Neumeier is self-publishing the sequels. (I reviewed the collection of short stories a few weeks ago.) *Pure Magic*, the second novel, is available now, and it is fantastic.

Following a tragic flash flood that took the life of his mother, Justin is wandering with no direction. One night after accepting the hospitality of a priest, he finds himself the target of a vicious werewolf attack. Two other werewolves intervene and save his life. These two are more civilized, but very insistent that Justin come with them to a place called Dimilioc claiming he is Pure and that this attack won't be the last. In fact they're completely confused as to how Justin has survived this long not knowing anything about the magic running through his veins. They are also surprised that he is a Pure male. This is new. Justin finds himself reluctantly accompanying them to the mysterious Dimilioc to meet their Master and discover the dangerous

heritage in a violent world he only vaguely understood from the new before this. There he meets the other Black Dogs and Natividad, a Pure girl who can help him unlock his abilities and teach him how to wield his power. But Justin is not convinced he belongs in this world, and he wants some answer. He decides to go and see what his grandmother learns and Natividad leaves with him on a mission of her own. There are dangerous and violent changes occurring in the world of the Black Dogs though and that danger is going to stalk the two Pure and help from their Black Dog allies may be too far away-and too distracted by their own troubles-to help them.

Coming into the world Neumeier created from an outside perspective in this second novel is an interesting way of reintroducing all of the important players and elements and also adding to the layers of the world. Justin is so much more than a vehicle for the reader though. Confused, angry, desperate, and so sad, he is overwhelmed by all of the new information coming his way when he was already feeling alone and emotionally wrecked. His reactions to being thrown into this world and experiencing the violence of the Black Dogs up close for the first time are completely relatable and serve as an interesting contrast to Natividad and Miguel's easy acceptance of the life they were born into. As a new character in the story, he also brought out aspects of the other character's personalities and revealed new things about them. Justin's relationship with Keziah does not start off well. There are expectations about relationships between Black Dogs and the Pure. Even though Justin is the first Pure boy anyone at Dimilioc has encountered, matching up with Keziah is the first thing that pops into everyone's heads. She's not happy about it. He is even less so when he realizes what everyone is thinking. She terrifies him (understandably), and he terrifies her in a different but no less potent way. I really enjoyed watching the two of them warily feeling each other out. Justin actually learns Pure magic quickly because he is a math genius and I loved this dimension of his character.

Natividad has just as much page time in this novel as Justin does and is still very much a main character. Her 16th birthday is rapidly approaching, and she is still trying to figure out exactly where she stands in Ezekiel's mind. Is she merely a convenience being the only Pure girl around or does he really want her? Natividad uses her road trip with Justin to work through some of her confused feelings. I loved the way both of these relationships developed over the course of the book. Natividad and Justin make a really good team and they bond rather quickly. Granted they have little choice but to learn to work together quickly or die. However, they do work hard to understand and learn from each other. The development of Natividad's relationship with Ezekiel is more complex. Again, Ezekiel is my favorite part of this book. (There is an added dimension to the tension here that comes from having read his story in the short story collection. You can still appreciate everything that happens here without reading it, but it's so good and adds so much that I highly recommend you do.) He makes some decisions that won't entirely make sense if you don't fully understand his past. It was a nice change to see him not so entirely in control in this and more than a little vulnerable.

There is a lot going on in the plot of this book. The Blood Kin, who the Black Dogs thought they had completely eradicated, seem to be rising again. There is a rogue band of Black Dogs wreaking havoc. With Dimilioc's decreased numbers from the war, they are vulnerable on every side. Justin and Natividad putting themselves at danger by going on a road trip without protection spreads Dimilioc thin. And basically all Hell breaks loose in more than one place and threats are everywhere. It is an action-packed thrill ride from start to finish and I could not put the book down. I love all these characters and thoroughly engrossed in their lives and the story unfolding. There are a lot of unanswered questions still as there is another three books yet to come, but this one ends in a satisfying way. (Though I still can't wait for the next book.)

I read an ARC sent to me by Rachel Neumeier.

Donna Cansdale says

A new ' must read' for fantasy fans

Well written, well edited and a great story line. Highly recommended from one who reads a LOT of speculative fiction and spends considerable time muttering darkly about bad grammar and spell check, even while enjoying a story! No problems with this author's work. This series has gone to the 'always get' list.

Samantha says

I'm so happy that the author is continuing with this series via self-publishing, so I don't want to be too critical of something that could have very well never been. On the other hand, I just wasn't convinced by the end of this book that I felt good about the direction the world building has taken. I found a lot of the dialogue to be very stilted, especially amongst the black dogs (even forgetting the fact that English may not be the first language for a lot of the characters), it felt awkwardly formal. I'm also not as satisfied with the explanations for a lot of the magic or magical/demon creatures that are encountered. I'll definitely continue with the series, but I'm still holding out hope that some of the things that have been irritating me may be resolved in the future (even though it may end up being a writing-style issue on my part).

Laura Florand says

And my crush on Ezekiel just keeps growing. :) Love this series and this book! (But start with Black Dog, those of you new to the series.)

Beth says

Looking back after finishing this, it strikes me that *Pure Magic* really is a middle book. It's a bridge between the first book - new world, high stakes, numerous deaths - and the third book, presumably with actual resolution and more deaths. In this book, there's danger and a lot of clever scheming but no death nor the slightest chance that anyone important will be killed. There's a new character, new information on magic, and new threats, but no real character development; Alejandro is still the protective brother, Grayson the inscrutable master, Miguel - in his tiny role - the supporting human.

Keziah gets a little development (though did anyone think she wasn't brave?) but the best parts of the book, to me, were Natividad and Ezekiel. Although they didn't have much character development either, aside from a sliver of a moment at the end of the book. The very end of the book is devoted to Ezekiel having to maintain appearances, ground covered by *Black Dog* and in the short stories, and I have to say I wanted more than that. Ezekiel constantly being vulnerable only serves to undermine his strength. (I think, maybe, him being vulnerable to Grayson is supposed to look like strength, but there's no way black dogs seeing that would recognize the subtlety. Even Justin, who's narrating the scene, didn't. There's a lot of subtext missing as a result.)

I'm hoping to get actual movement in the third book. And I know I think there will be deaths, but I don't actually want them to happen.

