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Need

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Media type:

Book

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Zara's beloved stepfather dies in front of her and so she is despatched by her mother to the barren wastes of Maine in winter to stay with her paternal grandmother and find some emotional stability.

It is clear from the start that she is in an unusual environment ? a shadowy figure follows her, her fellow students seem either unusually hostile or overpoweringly friendly, young boys disappear mysteriously, never to be seen again. The natural world seems determinedly hostile ? ceaseless snow and searing cold are brooding presences.

Cue werewolves, weretigers, wereeagles and pixies ? the latter the most dangerous of all, with their ability to mimic human voices and persuade Zara that her stepfather is still alive. But it is her own nature which ultimately betrays Zara ? she discovers that her father was a pixie king and she is now sought by the current king to be his queen and allay his need to kill young men.

There are too many layers which challenge credulity ? Zara's friends, grandmother and boyfriend are all supernatural creatures in human guise and the plot relies heavily on their ability to transform. Jones creates tension well, but the narrative is often overheated and so it loses its impact as the story progresses from excess to excess.

Need is aimed squarely at a teenage market obsessed with all things supernatural and American. Its clever use of all the requisite ingredients will, I am sure, earn it a place in this genre but its literary merits are by no means as securely realised.

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