



# Crewel

*Gennifer Albin*

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**Crewel** Gennifer Albin

*Incapable. Awkward. Artless.*

That's what the other girls whisper behind her back. But sixteen-year-old Adeline Lewys has a secret: She wants to fail.

Gifted with the ability to weave time with matter, she's exactly what the Guild is looking for, and in the world of Arras, being chosen to work the looms is everything a girl could want. It means privilege, eternal beauty, and being something other than a secretary. It also means the power to manipulate the very fabric of reality. But if controlling what people eat, where they live, and how many children they have is the price of having it all, Adeline isn't interested.

Not that her feelings matter, because she slipped and used her hidden talent for a moment. Now she has one hour to eat her mom's overcooked pot roast. One hour to listen to her sister's academy gossip and laugh at her dad's jokes. One hour to pretend everything's okay. And one hour to escape.

Because tonight, they'll come for her.

## Crewel Details

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Author : Gennifer Albin

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## From Reader Review Crewel for online ebook

### Arooj says

Oh, I am not happy.

Not happy *at all*.

In fact, I'm downright disappointed.

I was so excited to read this. This book was on my list of "must reads" of this year. The synopsis is so damn intriguing, right? So when I got this book, I was jumping up and down in excitement. The beginning started off really well - I was really into it. The synopsis I read said how Adelice has only a few hours to enjoy her freedom, because after that - well, I didn't know what to expect. I thought it'd be this really exciting book and I was looking forward to finding out.

And what did I find? Nothing unique. Turned out to be yet another typical dystopian book where the main protagonist has to go to some place in this dystopian world that's corrupted and she has a big secret she must hide from everyone. Now, how many times have I read a book like *that*?

What sucks the most is that the concept was superb - being able to manipulate time and matter? WHAT?! But the way it was described in this book was very confusing. The weaving is done on an actual loom with threads from which you can see what you're threading...somehow. I'm still not sure. I don't even know how I'm suppose to imagine it all. It was so damn confusing. Plus, I had all these questions, like, if they remove someones thread, which basically means that they die, do they just disappear? What about mountains and rivers? Same thing when they create something - does it just pop up out of nowhere? None of this was explained properly. And honestly, the plot was SO boring. Most of what Adelice did was learn more confusing stuff about Crewlers and then suddenly she's getting all primped up and go to parties and meet people...*\*sigh\**. I wanted more cool weaving stuff to happen! I only got about a third of the way in of the book, then I skimmed ahead a bit to see maybe if he story gets more exciting, but it didn't look like it. I wanted to like this book - so *badly*. But I didn't

And the romance? *\*shakes head\** I really don't understand why the population is segregated in some dystopian books. Why would the world go back to this old fashioned practice? In some books it works because it's explained well but in others it feels like it was made that way just so that when the main protagonist meets their love interest, they get all flustered and go "Oh, what is this feeling I'm getting? Is it because I haven't been allowed to interact with the opposite sex? Or is it loooooove?" I don't like these types of romances. It isn't convincing me to. I can't tell if their feelings are genuine. And even though I didn't read that far into the book and wasn't able to see how the romance went, what I read so far didn't impress me.

I am just so damn tired of getting excited about all these new dystopian books, only to have them fall flat. I give up. I'm going to try and not look forward to any new dystopian books - only the ones in series that I still like.

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### Kat Kennedy says

It's been so long since I actively disliked a book that I wasn't quite sure what to do with myself. The more I tried to separate my dislike for the characters and storytelling and try to analyze it impartially, the more I found myself saying, "Bugger this! Drink anyone?" to the empty air around me.

Crewel is a post-apocalyptic dystopian world in which women are oppressed and tightly controlled. It is a world where matter and people can be weaved and stitched through special looms that Spinsters use. This should have been right up my alley. It was definitely right up something, but it wasn't my alley.

Unfortunately, Crewel is a heavily character-based novel. I say unfortunately because there isn't a single character with more complexity or depth than a kiddie pool and certainly none of them are even a fraction of the fun. Even the main character, whose head we live in, is so vague and two dimensional that any actions and emotions she displays felt disconnected from the reality of the novel. This story, even in its most intense moments, was emotionless and the opposite of affecting. It was like watching a play only the stage is at the bottom of the cliff and you're at the top. So far removed that you can see what the actors are doing but engaging in them or the story is impossible.

There are a number of characters the narrator expects us to care about: Elanor, Valery, Amie, Jost, Erik, Pryana. However, most of these characters barely even have a role. Most of Valery's speaking lines come after the Great Tragedy that befalls her – and they're still only a few lines. Elanor as well, while having a slightly bigger role, is little more than a convenient plot device and represents one of the only semi-positively written female characters. Her role is so tightly packed into being a convenient tell-machine for the narrator to pass information, and to resolve a later plot point that there is nothing else to her.

The plot itself is a hot mess with no direction or focus. It flits around distractedly, trying to accomplish everything and achieving nothing. Don't even get me started on the ending! The main selling point of this novel is the weaving – which Adeline does almost none of since she spends more time making goo goo eyes are boys than she ever does interacting with women or doing the damn thing this book was named after.

This is made even worse when you consider the fact that the romance in this book is justifiably scoff-worthy. There isn't even enough material between them for one convincing romance. Since Adeline is about as interesting as wet cardboard, it's hard to imagine anyone falling for her. Each boy barely fares better. Their personalities combined still wouldn't save them from being inhumanely dull. They are just two more wooden puppets in a whole cast of wooden puppets.

For a novel that is supposed to be about the struggles of women in a highly patriarchal world, this novel was dreadfully sexist. When I spoke to a friend about this issue, they said, "I tend to disagree with a lot of the criticism re: the book being sexist, but think you could probably make a more compelling case."

Well, buckle up your seatbelt, sunshine\*! Here's my case!

\*Seatbelt not actually required.

Readers can and should make a deal about the slut-shaming and complete lack of positive female characters. That's an issue all in itself. But then, I guess, one could also sweep that aside with justifications. Because there are unpleasant and horrible women out there – because women are people, and people come in a mixed bag. And a society so entirely preoccupied with purity would result in citizens slut-shaming girls for acting outside of those bounds. So there's obviously an important discussion to be had on those topics, even though they are not definitely sexist on their own, only kind of sexist.

For me, the true test came when I considered what my Southern and Imaginary mother always told me and that is, “Honey cupcake, y’all should know that actions speak louder than words.” So true, Southern and Imaginary mother. So true. So whilst this book may have given lipservice to how unfair life was for women and how that TOTALLY wasn’t right or good, what service did the narration and plot actually have to say about women? Put it this way: When comparing the relevance and representation given to male and female characters in relation to their contribution to the novel, what does it say about women?

Almost every single male character we meet is important. Cormac, Jost, Erik are the three big ones. There are only a handful of other males with speaking roles in this book and they’re fairly neutral in their representation. People just doing their job. Only one male with a speaking role is depicted badly, which is a drunk, handsy official at a party – and he is still not portrayed worse than the woman trying to vie for his attention. At least, the characters narrating the situation focus on how disgusting she is, while he only gets a passing mention. I think there may be a waiter who has a speaking role for the purpose of showing how segregated and unfair their world is, but that’s it.

Compare that to the novel’s complete and utter lack of focus on women – which is pretty disgraceful for a novel that’s supposed to be about women’s struggles in a patriarchal society. The only important women in this book are Adeline and the women who torment her. We are introduced to whole batches of women, who are immediately dismissed by the character and text as meaningless and valueless. The girls from Adeline’s hometown? Just simpering morons waiting to get mated. Even her own younger sister cares for little else. It seems no one is as deep and thoughtful as Adeline. Then when she enters Coventry with a large group of her peers, they are immediately shown to be jealous and power-hungry, but ultimately completely inconsequential. We don’t meet any of them ever again whilst Jost, Erik and Cormac receive the large bulk of Adeline’s, and the narrative’s attention. Because they’re what really matters, ya know? What the menfolk are doing. The only exception to this rule, because it is a pattern repeated yet again when Adeline joins the Spinsters who are also cliquey and immediately dismissed from the narrative as pointless and worthless like the literally dozens of other women we meet, is Maela and Pryana. Maela is a power-hungry psychopath and Pryana is a power-hungry, vicious, idiot. Both are stupid and extremely ineffective at what they do. Female solidarity doesn’t exist in this novel. Unless you’re referring to the convenient plot-device that is Elanor. She is the sole exception.

Add to this the fact that the women in this novel all act inexplicably irrational. There is evil Cormac, and evil Maela and evil Pryana. Only one of them acts intelligently and with rationale – I’ll let you pick which one. You can depend on the evil women to be emotional, lashing out and sometimes hysterical. Behaviour that is never depicted in the men. For example, Maela asks Adeline to remove a strand from the weave. The strand is a person who doesn’t need to be removed and doing so could harm the weave, so she refuses. Maela takes her scalpel and tears into the weave out of anger. It turns out this was a school where Pryana’s sister lived. So Pryana... blames Adeline?! Because that totally makes sense. And she spends the rest of the novel irrationally tormenting Adeline. Valery, similarly blames Adeline for things that are entirely out of her control. It is so manufactured and senseless that it made the novel ridiculous. Almost as ridiculous as the fact that Adeline spent the novel entirely focused on boys. The plot went something like this:

Adeline’s family dies

Cormac

meets horrible girls

boy

boy

Cormac

stuff about weaving

boy

boy

boy

boy

Cormac

More horrible girls

boy

boy

boy

Cormac

Cormac

Even Loricel, supposedly the one, decent woman in power in this book is little more than a caricature. You can't claim a feminist text when the narration itself, despite constantly being surrounded by women, decides that all the male characters are so much more interesting and worth focusing on. When the few male characters are afforded exponentially more important roles than any of the many, many female characters – many of whom don't even get the honour of a name or mention outside of just Horrible Female #35 who says horrible thing to Adeline. When the rate of decent male character so far outstrips the demonstration of decent female characters that there isn't even room for comparison, you have a problem. You have a book that wants to say something about women, but ignores them in favor of focusing on men.

That is really fucking sexist. So... Bugger this! Drink, anyone?

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**Lola says**

[small one (hide spoiler)]

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**Giselle says**

**Initial reaction:**

Holy mother of giraffe balls!!!

**Official review:**

What. Did. I. Just. Read?

\*blinks\*

Ok, wow. Creative does not even *begin* to describe this formidable world that Gennifer Albin has built. Bringing in some sci-fi elements into it, the explanations of the weaving and how the whole process works simply blew me away. When it starts off it creates a lot of questions and wonderment, but as the world building progresses, we're brought into an extremely complex, incredibly well described futuristic world where everything and everyone can be manipulated by the touch of a Spinster. It can be hard to grasp, especially if you don't pay attention - this is the kind of book you have to really be alert for - and it pays off. Furthermore, Gennifer's world building is beautifully written, making it both surreal and believable. It's also menacing; piece by piece, we find out details about this world that are astonishing, bigger than anyone would have thought. It's revealed layer by layer, until you simply cannot fathom that any more mind-blowingness could come forth - then it does. The more I learned about it, the giddier I became. I love it when an author thinks outside the box; employing some sci-fi, even a bit of fantasy, to create a world that could easily become overwhelming, but instead, It becomes impressive, it becomes convincing, and heck, I think it even gave me brain cells!

Moving on to our dear Adeline. Adeline is not an especially tough protagonist. She's not weak by any means; she knows how, and when, to take a stand, fending for herself. But, she can be naive, even feel a bit underwhelming at first. Nonetheless, I, for one, enjoyed her flawed characterization. She's a simple girl in a surreal world and it makes her genuinely likeable. She goes through a believable character growth when she, like us, begins to understand just how extraordinary the world is; how things *really* work - inside and out. When you've been betrayed, when you go through unimaginable ordeals, you grow up. I enjoyed seeing how she realistically reacted under this pressure.

Having been brought up with a purity standard in a world where boys and girls live in separate neighbourhoods, Adeline has never been in love, or kissed a boy for that matter. So it takes her by surprise when she meets not one, but two handsome guys that are pining for her. There is a hint - just maybe a small scratch - of a love triangle, but the scratch is really only just a scratch. I fell head over heels with the romance in this book. Experiencing the "firsts" with Adeline is exhilarating, filling me with hope and lust and butterflies. And even though there is a strong romantic thread in the story, I never felt it down-right took over, nor does it take anything away from the main plot.

I know of one person who is majorly awaiting book two. I will not be the only one either I am sure. The ending is not a hair pulling cliffhanger per say, more like an OH-EM-GEE-the-sequel-is-gonna-rock-my-face ending! Like I said, the world is given to us in layers, but so is the plot - and the more I read, the faster I needed to turn the page. I think my Kobo sparked at one point. Point of the story? Read it. Maybe in print copy, for your safety.

Brilliant, completely gorgeous, and exceptionally unique, Crewel is highly recommended for sci-fi and dystopian fans.

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## MeMe Belikova First lady Ivashkov says

This book was EPIC! I LOVED everything about it! The story itself was unique and intriguing that I just could not put it down! **Crewel being her debut novel, I have to say Gennifer Albin is an author to be reckoned with.** Leave it to Gennifer to create an AMAZING and believable world where you can manipulate and weave time with matter. This whole concept is INCREDIBLE and I can't get enough of it, If this is what the future is like then count me in! This world she has built it so complex but in a GIVE ME MORE kind of way, it is so beautiful and will leave you dreaming about this book for days.

Adelice has trained all her life to fail a test that determines if you are a Spinster, someone who can weave time with matter. In Romen, being a Spinster is the best thing that could happen to any girl --It mean beauty, dresses and being treated like a queen basically. But being a Spinster is not what it seems and Adelice's parents know the truth, that is why they have trained her to fail every time. But the day has come when Adelice finally makes a mistake and weaves time in testing, the Guild has noticed and they are coming for her. As the story goes on you will follow Adelice's journey through LOVE(TRIANGLE),SECRETS,POWER and STRENGTH.

Here is a little intro/my thoughts on the characters!

**Adelice:** LOVE LOVE LOVE!!!! Usually when there is love triangles that are involved I get annoyed with the girl that is in between because they start whining over each boy like "omg I like him, but I love him." Oh no, what am I going to do type thing but Adelice was the total opposite she held her own! She never made it seem like she was too much worried about anyone but her family and herself and that is what I like most about her character she was smart and strong when it came to what she believed in! And thank god she is turned off when it comes to a man that is ten times older than her....unlike most books.....\*cough\*

**Pyrantha:** Oh gosh.....I liked her at first and then.....she turned on me. I don't like this girl, maybe she will come around in the next book? \*fingers crossed\* Hopefully! If she didn't you know what she would of really been one of my favorite characters but she just had to be a bitch for no reason UGH!!!! Come back nice Pyrantha I loved you!!!!!!

**Maela:** This may be wierd but I LOVE this girl!!! Yes, she is one of the EVIL characters but you just can't help but LOVE to HATE(LOVE) her!! There is more to Maela that we don't know about so we don't know why she is the way she is so until that union is peeled to it's core I can't judge Maela. I can't wait to see more of her in the next book if it is meant to be ;)

**Cormac:** What a PERV he is and an EVIL douche bag lol! But I LOVE HIM TOO!!!! I think I may be coming down with the evil syndrome because Cormac is HOTT in an old kind of evil way. I guess it is just Gennifers writing that makes you have a connection with every character in her book, good or evil! Cormac is just great at being bad :)

**Jos:t** One of the lover boys.... I like Jost, he is so sweet and kind. You can feel the spark that him and Adelice have between each other, it is just magical! I can't wait to see where their relationship goes and if



they are meant to be.

**Erik:** Why are you so SEXY? Erik just has this think about him where he doesn't have to do anything for you to like him, you just kind of do. He has that effect on me too as you can see because I am in LOVE <3 Even though him and Adeline mesh well together I also don't think it would work out between them, Erik is a lost soul and he has some soul searching that he needs to do for himself.

This book was truly an AMAZING read! I recommend this book to everyone that loves a good Dystopia! This book is beautifully written and that twist and turns in this book will leave you in a dream like state after reading this!

**Rating:** AMAZINGLY CREWEL (that I have to wait for book 2:)

-Alice

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## Keertana says

Rating: 2.5 Stars

I think we're all familiar with the saying, "It's not you, it's me!" and while I would love to claim that my disappointed feelings concerning this book stem from me, and not the book itself, I honestly don't think I can. Yes, my unusually prolific knowledge on dystopian and science-fiction novels definitely played a role in my lack of amazement at the so-called creativity of this novel and that same understanding enabled me to predict the ending of this novel far before the half-way mark of this book was even reached, but overall, I really do think it's the book as well, not *just* me. Yet, then again, with my reputation of being a black sheep, you could just say this book wasn't for me, but who knows? Ultimately, the point is that *Crewel* was a disappointing read with a lot of potential which failed to live up to the immense amount of hype surrounding it.

Adeline lives in Arras, a world where unmarried women with weaving talents, known as Spinsters, can control time and matter. Ever since she was young, Adeline has discovered that she has this power as well, but she has struggled to keep it suppressed due to her parent's fear of Adeline becoming separated from her family and taken away to the lone towers where the Spinsters live their lives. On the day of testing, however, Adeline fails to fail and when The Guild, the totalitarian government which controls every aspect of their lives, comes to take her away, her parents force her to run away. Nevertheless, Adeline is soon caught and taken to become a Spinster where she causes as much trouble as she possibly can. Yet, as she will soon find out, there is more to The Guild than what meets the eye and her parents just may have been on to something when they begged her to run away...

Wow, a dystopian novel where women control time? *Awesome! Original! Creative!* Riiight? Wrong. I've heard all those three words used to described this novel, but in reality, *Crewel* is no different from any other dystopian book. We have our classic government which controls everything, from who you marry to what you study to what you eat and how many children you have. We all know that dystopian novels are about fixing the wrongs on Earth and restoring control, so really, this is *nothing* new. Furthermore, the whole idea of being able to kill people at mere whim isn't anything new either! Lois Lowry did it in *The Giver*, Kurt Vonnegut did it in his short story "2 B R 0 2 B" and I'm sure countless other authors have done it in the past

as well. While I'm not denying that *Crewel* does have an immense amount of originality in its conception – which we see only after the 50% mark of this novel has been passed – for the most part, this story just focuses on a dystopian government like any other. If anything, I found it to be formulaic and extremely typical, which was all rather disappointing.

Speaking of disappointments, I think the characters were what ruined this story for me. On the surface, Adelice is an amazing heroine – she's a strong protagonist, she's clever, she's intelligent, and she sticks up for what she believes in. Yet, like any building, her foundation was off, which only made her overall character topple down as the story progressed. In *Crewel*, Adelice is credited for running away from The Guild on her own and for being a rebel – a role she quickly assumes without much reason. I think we were supposed to realize that the reason Adelice caused so much trouble was because her parents were killed, but this was hardly mentioned. It felt, to me at any rate, that she lacked true motivation for her actions and was falsely perceived as a rebel throughout the novel when she made it quite clear that she wouldn't have run away if it wasn't for her parents. Thus, the question for much of the novel which begs to be answered is *why* does Adelice do what she does and cause trouble for herself and for others as a Spinster when she doesn't even know *why* her parents hated The Guild? We never find out and while Adelice receives plenty of answers later, for the most part, her actions lack logical reasoning.

In addition to Adelice though, the villains in this story were mediocre at best. If anything, they were predictable, unoriginal, and almost cartoon-like in their anger, misbehavior, and evil deeds. In general, they failed to impress me and didn't add anything to this novel. Furthermore, they were vastly underdeveloped – much like the love interests in this story as well. Yes, that's right, love interests, *plural*. We have, ladies and gentlemen, another love triangle on our hands! While this wasn't as bad as some I've read previously, it was still extremely irritating. Still, I have to admit though that Jost was an extremely developed character and I loved him throughout the story, although I did think the “problem” between him and Adelice was *way* too easy to see coming. Erik, on the other hand, was as flat as paper and seemed to pine after Adelice for no reason, so that aspect of their romance irritated me. Overall though, the love triangle really *could* have been worse.

*Crewel* is one of those novels that had so much potential, but just fell flat. I really loved the manner in which Albin revealed to us that this novel was a dystopian and some of the cruelty she exposed and horrors of the The Guild and the life in Arras were beautifully written, as was the character of Adelice's mentor. Yet, despite all those good qualities, it still remains that this novel was predictable, contained mostly underdeveloped characters, lacked originality, and had an extremely slow pacing to start with. I feel as if so much of the beginning could have just been cut out and if the second half of this was better edited, it would have been a much better story. Unfortunately, I'm not sure if I'm going to continue with this series. I really do think I can predict most of what will occur in Book Two already, so that definitely does not bode well. If you haven't read a lot of dystopian or science fiction novels in the past, I think this will blow you away, but if you have, this might just wind up being another typical dystopian story for you. Ultimately though, *Crewel* joins my pile of extremely disappointing reads – after all the hype, I think I was just expecting *more*.

*Thank you to NetGalley and MacMillan for providing me with a copy of this novel in exchange for a honest review!*

You can read this review and more on my blog, Ivy Book Bindings.

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## **Rusty's Ghost Engine (also known as..... Jinky Spring) says**

Full review and more

<https://edwardsghostengine.wordpress....>

My my what a struggle!

It took me ten days yes ten fucking days! I had to force myself to finish but I'll start by describing the (few) things I liked.

The concept and storyline was very different indeed. In Adelice's world, Arras, the Guild controls and monitors everything via the Weave (a tapestry of threads made of time and matter). Everything has a thread and the Guild can alter or get rid of threads therefor altering and controlling the world around them. Adelice is a spinster, a girl who has a gift to weave the threads that make up time and matter. Spinsters are the only people that can alter the Weave, that's why the Guild treasures them. About three quarters of the way through there was a really good, shocking revelation about Arras and how it'd been woven...

I found those ideas very clever and interesting. It definitely made me think about the makeup of the world around us. It's a very clever idea to think of the world as one big tapestry. Plus a few years back I remember watching a documentary about time travel and parallel universes. Lots of theories were discussed, one of them was about the destruction of this universe (entropy) in the far future. It discussed how future civilizations could escape to other universes or perhaps even CREATE their own universe/reality. So that's what the description of this book reminded me of...

In fact I'm sure this story is inspired by the strings theory...

Seriously though, that's pretty much where the intrigue ends. The rest of this book was literally a lump of SHIT with hardly ANYTHING happening!

I mean honestly this was so boring I began to visualize the threads as cobwebs! In fact here's the full process that was me reading this book.

STAGE 1. I was excited after seeing this online. I couldn't wait for the release.

STAGE 2. Approx 50 pages in "Uh oh I have a feeling I'm gonna be in here a long time.."

STAGE 3. Approx halfway "Uhhhhhhhhhhhhhh...Zzzzzzz...(Only I wasn't smiling)"

STAGE 4. Almost at the end, "What? Did something good happen?" Adelice, Jost and Erik fall through the Weave and land on Earth..

FINNISH! Oh man, I'm so glad can you see my tears of joy?

FINAL REACTION/OPINION..**The plot was soooo slow and sooooo full of shit!**

I really don't enjoy reading shit and I fail to comprehend how so many people have given this high ratings.

The characters all felt really dull and unreal. Why did this story drag so much? It was so so boring, the only thing I was looking forward to this past week was finishing this crap! Now that I've FINALLY (at long fucking last) finished, I really feel like a weight has been lifted. I feel like I've accomplished something big! \*clap\* \*clap\* \*CHEER!\*

I'm really starting to agree with Melissa Marr "Life's too short to bother with books I'm not enjoying." But with me I just have to know what happens at the end, which was a cliffhanger of sorts. I highly doubt I'll be continuing this series but we'll see.. I just really hate books that build you up for something big, then let you down with a truly crap story.

So to close up this "review" I'll say there were some awesome, mind-blowing ideas that had huge potential but were pitifully wasted in this...SHIT!

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## **Blythe says**

Well, this is going to be a difficult review to write. Trust me, if I could, my entire review would comprise of a bunch of gifs depicting happy dances, like so:

And no, I don't know what that last gif *is* exactly. Sure, it might be irrelevant, but what I do know is that it's a woman in a crab costume and it's staying.

Now, where was I? Oh yeah, how if I could my entire review would be of gifs, but apparently, that's not a "proper" review, because it doesn't have to do with the contents of the book. Hmph. Well then! Here goes my attempt at writing a review for *Crewel*, but don't say I didn't warn you: it will be a jumbled mess. (Just go to the bottom of this review for a much shorter evaluation on my thoughts of this book.)

It's been almost a full day since I finished reading *Crewel*, and I have no clue as to how I'm going to put my thoughts of it into words, or even describe the book in any way. I *could* write my own synopsis for *Crewel*, like I normally would at this point in the review, but,

1) I'm afraid of giving away too much, and would like anyone interested in reading *Crewel* to go into it knowing as little as possible;

and 2) I honestly have no freaking clue how I could possibly write a synopsis for this book.

What I can say, however, is that the basic plot for *Crewel* is absolutely brilliant, and that this book is one of the most original and creative books I've ever read in my life, and definitely the most original and creative book I've read this year. You can tell that Albin clearly put a lot of thought into what she wanted *Crewel* to be, and the world in which *Crewel* takes place is breathtakingly detailed and captivating.

Along with the flawless world building and the sheer originality (something we as readers, unfortunately, don't find very often in YA), the characters are all very likable and flawed (and, therefore, believable), and the Albin's writing is stunning and gorgeous. Back to the characters in *Crewel*: we're immediately introduced to our protagonist, Adelice. While Adelice is not the smartest, strongest, or all around best protagonist you'll ever read about, she's still a very likable character, and she is very easy to sympathize with. And while she is a bit naive when it comes to boys, it was understandable considering she was raised in a sector of the world where people were segregated by gender.

And, since we're on the topic of boys and Adelice's naivete towards them, then I might as well say it right now, that yes: **there is a love triangle**, and this is the main - if not only - reason *Crewel* is receiving four stars from me as opposed to five. I really have zero tolerance for love triangles now, since they appear so, so often in YA, and I especially have no tolerance when there's the one person in the love triangle the indecisive teenager is obviously going to end up with, and then there's the other one, who really only exists to add stress to the main relationship. And, adding to that, I just didn't find anything special about the two love interests in *Crewel*, and in the end, I have a blurred opinion on both of them.

However, despite the unfortunate and predictable love triangle, I found *Crewel* to be a thoroughly interesting and brilliant debut, with an ending that is sure to provide an even better sequel. While it's not a perfect novel, it was just what I needed to rid me of my crappy book streak, and I loved it.

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And now, for those of you who didn't want to go through the inevitable torture that you'd be put through if you read my mess of a review (or, if you've read the review and are now reading this, for which I applaud you in making it this far), here's the much shorter evaluation on my thoughts of *Crewel*:

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## oliviasbooks says

**'The tech is safer now ... It can change how a person acts and thinks.'** I tell him about what Cormac said about isolating problem areas in the strand and splicing new material into an individual's thread. I vividly remember the awe I felt when I was watching 'The Matrix' for the first time. Although it puzzled my mind with questions like 'How can virtual procreatic activity result in a real baby? Do the machines manufacture an embryo when a couple living in the Matrix stops using condoms?' or 'How do the human bodies produce more energy than the upkeep of the huge living apparatus swallows?' I was easily lulled into believing it might be possible and I was only missing a clue. It all sounded so convincing that I had the uncomfortable urge to double-check my own reality against the frightening idea of it being nothing more than a clever illusion.

Reading 'Crewel' was nothing like that. I was feeling something close to awe - but only for myself, because I managed to stay on board past the 70% mark of my Kindle.

Also is 'believable' a term that I would never, ever associate with this woven-world setting. In fact until approximately 36% I had convinced that I was dealing with a fantasy novel set in a fantastic totalitarian world unlike our own. The notion that 'Crewel' could take place on post-apocalyptic Earth never crossed my mind and comes to the formerly ignorant heroine as a surprise revelation, too.

But not only the heroine, the whole population of 'Arras' is unrealistically docile, content and easy to control - without being held in check by threats (the rulers have ridiculously easy means to change people's minds same as they have means to adapt their appearance or their environment: Removing, replacing or repairing threads on a loom is just a matter of seconds for a capable and virtuous weaveress after all). The information that someone living in the neighborhood has to report in for being rewoven is processed among the citizens with slight unease, but does not cause boosts of fear or resentment; same as being claimed by the government to become a glamorous but secluded and never-to-be-seen-again spinster, who weaves reality and features in the yellow press, equals being selected to participate in a beauty or talent TV show today: The 'lucky' person does not really know what participation entails, but it will make her famous - so what?

And thus I have mentioned my two most annoying aspects of the story (I will not talk about the unlikable characters, the overflow of mean girls or the love-quadruple in this review. Things like that are definitely of matter of taste. I am concentrating on the lack of logic and believability here.): The spinsters' and the creweler's way of weaving the world (view spoiler) on a couple of looms and the spinsters' paradoxical position between having to remain pure, untainted women, who are idolized for their gift of creating the whole world with their hands like a virgin Mary would be for creating a foetus without male input, on the one hand, and serving as seductive geishas to the needs of leery senators at administrative functions on the other:

Weaving the world on a loom: A loom, as I am able to imagine it, is - however large an industrial one gets to be - a device that produces something two-dimensional. Usually threads go in two directions and can consist of multiple fine fibres. Really intricately woven or not - in contrast to cloth reality as we know it is a three-dimensional thing. In 'Crewel' there are rooms and rooms full of looms, large and small, wooden and metallic, and each of it supposedly holds something big and complex like a whole city. A handful of connected strands can represent (or rather be) a school-building and ripping a single thread with a sharp object before it grows thin and unravels naturally can mean ending someone's life. How all the cloths of those unconnected looms form one seamless country, how people are able to walk around although their position is fixed firmly between two other threads, how specially gifted heroine Adeline is able to see and manipulate the threads of time and matter without a loom when she is part of the world - and suddenly the walls of a room consist of more 'wool' than a whole district -, how the Coventry itself has to be a cloth on a loom that contains other looms, how people are able to grow grain on field that has been created by the Creweler, who plans how many ponds to put where in order to feed the population with fish, and how zooming in at a loom is possible, when nothing sounding remotely digital is mentioned, does not get addressed at all during the first three quarters of the story I more or less patiently endured. At one point the Creweler reveals some crucial information concerning the planet's past, its physical matter and some clever inventor who found a way to shape it, but she did not solve the urgent, logical dilemma described above.

Women, spinsters, sexuality and creativity: Almost right from go there is a kind of inconsistency in the position and the behavior expected from women that made it obvious to me that the author wanted the reader to notice something is off in the gender department, something that might have been different or even better at some point in the times proceeding the plot. Still, to me things were that unbelievably strange, that I had to shake my head in disbelief instead of employing it in contemplation: Young males and females live completely separate lives. There are even districts for couples with female offspring and districts for families who have born boys. Each girl has to stay pure until she becomes a spinster or is matched to her future

husband. In spite of that the art of brightly colored, seductive facial make-up and attire is deemed to be extremely important to acquire. Adelice's mother, for instance, who has a husband and absolutely no say in who she wants to be with, spends some time in front of her mirror each morning because an attractively painted face pleases her boss. Gifted girls are a commodity. They are unceremoniously fetched from their homes and put through a process that assesses the strength of their abilities. Although refusing would not be an option anyhow they are pampered by personal assistants and make-up artists, showered with beautiful clothes, good food and media attention. And even though the common opinion is that only virgin women can do the weaving or the creweling necessary for survival, Arras' senators traditionally order very young spinsters to accompany them to official banquets and state functions as arm candy and as bed warmers, too. Apart from my irritation concerning how women have managed to stay the bottom feeders in a society that *completely* depends on their special work (view spoiler), I wondered why the rulers did not think of setting aside especially attractive girls to form a caste of pleasure givers and assign a supposed importance to those working in the sexual sector, instead of 'wasting' their country's future creators, guarantors of nourishment and housing, on their personal gratification and risking the population's wrath. In addition our little creweling star, who describes herself as shy, goes from being ignorant, timid and naive to behaving brazen, saucy and confident in rocket time. Such a character twist is not a beautiful thing to behold.

At the point at which I stopped reading signs of rebellious activity have started to manifest; and I suppose not far ahead there will be a big gender-related bang (view spoiler) and a revelation of someone evil purposefully drawing the 'strings' tight to keep everybody in line. But that will definitely be too late for me. The train that would have had the power of turning me into a believer has left the station long ago.

So. Please weave a better setting next time, Ms. Albin. And do make the basic concept water-tight. If not, I am not willing to try on one of your hip, dystopian garments again.

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## Reynje says

### 2.5 stars

In a word, I found Crewel inconsistent.

The good? The concept. I thought the central idea behind Crewel, returning to the roots of the word "spinster" and the mythology of weaving, was interesting and strong. Albin's spinsters have the ability to manipulate and repair the weave of their world (the "weave" being the individual strands making up the physical world and the people in it, entwined with the constant flow of time). Weaving is a highly specialised skill requiring particular finesse, and Spinsters are accorded a level of privilege and prestige in the world of Arras, despite the fact that they live effectively cloistered in Coventries and are controlled by the governing Guild.

That said, the execution is hit and miss. Albin's particular take on time and matter and how they can be manipulated is intriguing, but not explored very deeply. This is light science-fiction and as such the worldbuilding assumes a degree of reader buy-in that not all will be able to extend. (When you start messing with time, I start asking questions, and Crewel doesn't give a lot of answers). However, if you're willing to suspend some belief and take Albin's world as she presents it, Crewel's premise is both inventive and engaging.

Adelice has been trained from a young age to conceal her weaving ability by her parents, who have

reservations about the governance of the world they live in. Ostensibly crime, poverty and disease-free, Arras is nevertheless a tightly controlled society in which women have little agency and few rights. Segregation of the sexes is widely practiced (at least, partially – Adelice lives in a sector where all children are female, though there are plenty of adult males living there). Travel is severely restricted – reserved for mostly male officials. Food is rationed. Reproduction is regulated. Women who do not exhibit weaving ability are expected to marry, and their employment options are limited.

However, due to an unconscious slip during routine testing, Adelice reveals her skill and is forcibly removed from her home to become a Spinster. For me, this where the inconsistency begins. Adelice informs the reader that *they come for them at night*, vaguely sinister figures who remove girls from their homes under cover of darkness. However, she later explains that girls dream of becoming Spinsters – coveting a life of luxury and status. This doesn't compute for me. Why remove girls at night in such an intimidating manner if most of them view it as a privilege, something to strive for?

After a futile attempt at escape, Adelice is transported to the Western Coventry, unsure of the fate of her mother and sister. Following a short incarceration, during which she grieves over the traumatic circumstances of her removal, Adelice bounces back rapidly. Before long she's whisked away to the Coventry's high tower, plied with luxuries, training with the other Eligibles and singled out by a vindictive Spinster, Maela, and the creepy Ambassador Cormac Patton.

Because of course, Adelice isn't just any old prospective Spinster, she's *Super Special* .

And of course, there are *Hot Guys* .

Strangely, Crewel reminded me in places of *The Selection*. This is another novel where "purity", beauty, clothing and make up are given a peculiar amount of attention and almost disproportionate page time. The Spinsters are required to wear dresses and stockings, to be pandered to by personal stylists and domestic staff, to be occasionally squired about by Guild dignitaries as arm decorations at official functions. They are also required to maintain "purity standards", since Spinster's abilities are allegedly tied to their virginity. All the while, they're also apparently ensuring weather, food distribution and the day to day operations of life in Arras run smoothly – though Albin provides minimal detail on how the Spinster's orchestrate this round the clock. Further, Adelice undergoes something of a transformation - in the hands of her aestheticians she's a vision of beauty. While I can appreciate that this is part of the world Albin is building, one built on illusion and facades, I'm also perplexed by the amount of time spent on the minutiae of the Spinster's accoutrements. Comparatively little time is spent on the daily work of the Spinsters, how they operate the looms and manage their considerable responsibilities.

Oh, wait, I'm not really. Not when Adelice has the burgeoning attentions to two young men to consider.

To be fair, Crewel gains momentum in the second half and the complexity of Arras becomes more interesting. The stakes are raised as Adelice discovers just what nefarious deeds the Guild are capable of, and the potential of her own abilities. Complex ethical questions are hinted at – though mostly brushed over – and Albin uses her secondary characters to challenge and criticise the restrictive world of Arras, including their enforced notions of gender equality, sexuality and free will.

But ultimately, I'm left feeling underwhelmed by Crewel. It's not a bad book, but I feel much of its potential was left untapped. The big reveal at the climax of the novel is clever, and the ending makes the promised sequel enticing, but Crewel also falls into some familiar tropes. While I appreciate Albin's efforts to imbue Adelice with distinct personality – she's tenacious and sarcastic – she's still something of a super special



snowflake, a concept I'm thoroughly tired of. A little more clarity around the finer points of weaving and the structure of Arras wouldn't have gone astray either.

It's an interesting novel, but ultimately, an uneven one.

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## **K. says**

### **1.5**

Nothing is clear about this book.

- The characters are off, their intentions and motivations and reactions are off.
- I don't understand the weaving of time and matter...how can you see a bird's-eye view of a street from threads?
- Why do Spinsters have to be dressed up and made to look beautiful? Why are cosmetics and fashion *such* a big deal!! I do not get!!
- If Spinsters had control of such power, why didn't they just change the government?

I quit after a hundred pages so yeah, I have no right to complain...but I think, by then, readers should have been given *some* vague idea of how the focal concept of the story works. And it was such a weird world, too. It was futuristic but then there are the Spinsters who weave life, which kind of suggests an old world of myth, back to the time of Oracles or something.

The whole thing was just *off*.

It made my brain sleepy -- more than it normally is.

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## **Jennifer Armentrout says**

Amazing. No other words needed.

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## **Steph Sinclair says**

Without a doubt *Crewel* is the most creative novel I've read so far this year. When I first read the blurb I thought, "A dystopian society where people are weaving time?! YES! Gimme! Tell me more!" The dystopian genre has really taken off lately and sometimes it can be hard to find a novel that separates itself from the pack. *Crewel* does just that and does it well. It completely stands out with its complex concept, feisty heroine and a plot that kept me guessing over and over. Whoa. Can I pull out the winning gif?

The beginning of *Crewel* reminded me a lot of *Matched* by Ally Condie. Now before you start cringing and exiting out of this browsing window, let me assure you that it's not what you think. The set up is only similar because both societies involved tight monitoring of its citizens. This means they are given a small pool of marriage options, limitations on the amount of children they can have, restricted access to other parts of the society, jobs chosen for them, etc. That's where our similarities end and where the awesome begins.

Adelice, our main character, has the ability to weave time on an actual loom. It is a highly coveted ability in her society because it pretty much guarantees a woman a higher social status and a comfortable lifestyle without needing a husband. I'll admit I was worried about how Albin would pull off a society that was generally misogynistic. There are really only two outcomes for that: fail really hard or win. Even though women were considered second-rate in this world (needing a husband, only having secretarial type jobs, no real positions of power, can't travel without a man, etc.) and were held to unfair higher standards than their male counterparts (Spinters had to remain "pure", women were expected to always appear a certain way in public: Make-up, dressed up and heels, act like a "lady") I never felt that this was ever accepted by the main character or by other secondary characters. And while I contemplated how I could ever survive in a society that forced me to wear heels ALL THE TIME (I freakin' live in my Converse, dude), I realized that these ideals were being challenged especially through Adelice's character. She was a strong, formidable heroine who did not back down or allow anyone to push her around. She took action at her own personal risk. She was bold, gutsy and witty. I was like, "YES! You tell that man, girl. Give 'em a piece of your mind!"

As for Arras, this is yet again another book that makes talking about the world building difficult, mostly due to how Albin tells the story. She doesn't lay out the world building in the beginning over the first few chapters like most dystopians. In fact, for the first half of the book I still had quite a few questions on how the society in *Crewel* actually functioned. But the reader is given pieces bit by bit. As I learned more about the world, the plot continued to open up along the way. At first I wasn't sure how I felt about that style because I like my world building straight up, but it grew on me and by the end of the book I had an appreciation for how it was told.

One thing I have to mention was the plot twist. This is again why I'm reminded of *Matched* because they were forced to either marry or stay single. Anyone see a problem with that? I almost thought Albin was going to go down that same tired road Condie did with an unrealistic world. But then Albin threw in that plot twist when I was least expecting it. She must have known I was questioning the validity of a society that didn't even *mention* gay people. Then BAM! The plot twist came out of nowhere and backhanded me. All I could do is sit back, ice my face and nod my head in silent approval.

*Oh, Albin, I totes see what you did there.*

"But, Steph!" you say. "Why aren't you giving *Crewel* 5 stars? This book sounds amazeballs!" Why, yes it *was* amazing, but I still had a few questions (if the neighborhoods are segregated by gender of the children, what happens if a couple has a boy and a girl?) not to mention I didn't fall in love with the \*gasp\* triangle of love. That really doesn't shock me because I'm usually not a fan of love triangles in the first place. I could probably count on one hand how many I actually *did* like. *Crewel's* love triangle didn't bother me to the point of "headdesk-ation", but I did feel that the relationships were underdeveloped and generally unnecessary. To me it felt like you could easily take out the romance of at least one beau (preferably Jost) and the story wouldn't suffer one bit. But the story is not yet over. Who knows what could happen!

Overall, I really like *Crewel* and think dystopian fans who are looking for something *completely* different, will eat this up. I don't usually say this that often, but *Crewel* is definitely a debut that lives up to the hype

and will have readers hungering for more. I know I am.

*ARC was provided by the publisher for review. Thank you, Macmillan!*

\*Want a chance to win this ARC? Check out Cuddlebuggery's Anniversary Giveaway and enter to win!

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## **shady boots | #WatchPOSE says**

This review is also available over at my blog.

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Actual rating might be 2.5 or 2.75. Or just 2 stars, I honestly don't even know.

After seeing the positive reviews of this book on Goodreads start pouring in, I can't deny that my excitement grew, so I crossed my fingers and requested this title. I was giddy when I was approved, and couldn't wait to start. Besides the number of positive reviews, the concept also intrigued me a lot. A dystopian world that has a lot of time-weavers? Sign me up! I haven't had a dystopian novel wow me since *What's Left of Me* by Kat Zhang, and I was hoping this one would change that.

Unfortunately, I ended up going from this:

To this:

So we have Adelice, a girl who can weave time with matter, and who's hiding her powers from the Guild, because a girl like her would be chosen to be a Spinster. Being a Spinster is anything a girl could want, but Adelice knows the truth about it, that she'd have to control people's lives and follow whatever the Guild wants her to do, sometimes including removing/cutting certain people. Adelice has tried to hide her powers, but she slipped during a testing and now the Guild is coming for her.

What I liked about this book was the originality of the concept, and the whole Spinster-Creweler thing. As for the story, the beginning parts were okay. I liked Adelice, but I kind of have a love-hate relationship with her. At times she seems strong and sarcastic, but at other times she makes me want to pull my hair out due to her Mary-Sue-ness constantly showing.

It took me roughly fifteen days to finish this book, because it didn't do a good job in pulling me in and keeping me interested. The plot was hard to follow and the characters weren't all that likable.

Don't even get me started on the romance. -\_- The two love interests are Josten and Erik, both extremely gorgeous and blue-eyed. One's a servant with a tortured past and the other seems to be the boytoy of one of the villains. Of course, Adelice ends up kissing them both and torn and all but it's clear that Jost is the main love interest. I hate love triangles, and the one in this book is no exception. It really annoyed me.

Also, spoiler time. (view spoiler)

Anyways, the ending was a hot mess. I didn't even know what the hell was going on anymore, and I kind of gave up then and thought "Oh whatever, let's just get this over with."

I don't really have much else to say about this book. In short, the concept was interesting, the time-weaving thing was pretty creative, but the characters were unlikable and besides the concept, this pretty much reads like your average YA dystomance.

So . . . yeah, that's pretty much it. I'd still recommend you this book, though, because maybe it's just a matter of taste. My interest in dystopians have been pretty low lately.

Thank you to NetGalley and Macmillan for sending me this galley.

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### Stacia (the 2010 club) says

*"I'm here because it's the last place they'll look."*

*"Look for what?" I ask, unsure if I want to know the answer.*

*"Revolution."*

THIS BOOK FRIED MY BRAIN.

*I'll award Crewel a happily confuzzled 3.5 stars.* Of course, it wouldn't be nice if I let you know just who said the above quote. I'll leave you with the element of mystery, as if this book wouldn't do that to you on its own.

Am I the only person who had a few moments of brain trauma while trying to figure out this world ~~within a world~~ uh... ~~outside of a world~~ ... ~~parallel to a world~~ uh... yeah.

All I know is this : **WE'RE ALL PUPPETS OF THE WEAVE.** I thought that I was slightly confused while reading *Hourglass Door*. This is a similar, but extremely amped up, version of how people can manipulate space and time through their own machinations. Upon first impression, I thought this book was going to be another version of *The Selection* where shoddy world building was going to be excused because of the distraction of two cute boys vying for the lead female's attention. But then we went from no world building to "throw everything in the stew pot at once and things will sort themselves out!" I'm still reeling from the wtf-ery that just took place.

**So, you ask...did I like the book?** I did! At least, I loved the characters and the concept. I'm not sure if I've quite made sense of how this world is even possible. Yes, I get that it's some sort of fantasy/sci-fi hybrid thing going on here and that I should just go with it. What you all don't know is that I can't get through many movies without asking "why?" at least a few times. My poor little brain wants to understand every little random detail sometimes, when everyone else is just accepting of the entertainment value. Basically, in a nutshell, Adelice is a "Spinster" (yeah, historical romance would coin this term as an insult)...a type of girl who can weave the threads of time and matter to influence the world around her. The weaves in the loom contain life as we know it - people, places, things...even the atmosphere, such as the weather. If you thought mafias could get rid of people easily, they ain't got nothin' on the spinsters. Don't piss off this government, or your thread is gonna get taken out of the loom.

*"What happens to people when they're ripped?" I whisper.  
"Honestly, I don't know," she says. "I'm sorry."*

Whatever was going on, I eventually started to warm up to the possibilities of where this series is going to take us. The ending took the idea of connected worlds and dropped us into a huge dilemma. I can only imagine how much trouble is going to be brought down on our trio of misfit toys as they navigate their new reality.

### **The Players :**

*Adelice* - Her name. I keep wanting to call her Adelaide. In the lottery of crappy names, she hit it big. So far, I don't have any sort of strong opinion about her. I think she's a run-of-the-mill protag who's on a quest for truth, which tends to throw us off from learning many real details about her character itself.

*"I can't be the first eligible who ever ran."  
"No, but you're special."  
"Yeah, what makes me different?"  
"They didn't kill you."*

*Jost* - Well, hellloooooo Jost. I'm not the type of person to make "team edward/jacob" shirts, but if I had to pick a guy in this bizarre love triangle, I'd be firmly on team Jost. However, I'm slightly annoyed by the fact that Jost might have unclaimed baggage to get in the way. But he's tough, protective, and yet somehow mysterious. The bonus is he'll feed you if you're unable to do it yourself!

"Here," Jost offers, picking up the plate and gathering a forkful of the potatoes.

*Erik* - The playboy. While this type of character can be appealing in his own way, I prefer Jost's untamed character to Erik's refined one. But I can't say that he wouldn't be able to charm his way in if he gave it some effort...

"So exactly what's on the agenda tonight?" I ask Erik.  
"Well, you looking beautiful for one thing," he says, and I have to hold myself back from laughing.  
"Does that stuff work with other girls?" I ask, barely containing my amusement.  
"Yeah," he says, grinning widely. "How are you so immune to my charms?"  
"Years of segregation."  
"That usually works in my favor," he admits in a whisper.

I'm still a little unclear about where we're being taken, but I'll count *Crewel* as a good first book to an unusual series. Book 2 will definitely be put into my reading rotation when it comes out.

*This book was provided from the publisher through Netgalley in exchange for an honest review.*

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