



Vulpi

Kate Gordon

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Cat Connolly is a Thyla now. She's not sure where her life is heading, but she knows she doesn't want to go back to the human world.

But all is not well among the shapeshifters. The treaty between the Thylas and the Sarcos is causing tension and the malevolent Diemens are still on the hunt.

Then into Cat's life wanders someone who should be an enemy but acts like a friend - and everything changes again. She discovers more about shapeshifters and Diemens, about Tessa, and about her own heart.

Vulpi continues the story of Tasmania begun in Thyla. It is the story of how the shapeshifters were created, and a clue to what they might become. It is the story of what happened to Cat, and about the decisions we all must make as we learn how to be.

Vulpi Details

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Author : Kate Gordon

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From Reader Review Vulpi for online ebook

Lissa says

Hmmm... location photos probably won't come for a while because that would require an actual road trip and I have to, you know, work and stuff.

My review is split in to five sections: Writing, Plot, Worldbuilding, Characters, and X-Factor. Each section comprises of either half or one star, except X-Factor which can utilise two whole stars.

Writing 0

I hate to do this. I really do. Where has Gordon's decent prose gone? I didn't have a problem with the actual technique in Thyla: the second person narration was interesting and fairly innovative, but the info-dumping through eavesdropping was way too convenient. The writing was smooth and well-structured, for the most part, until Tessa figured out her secret.

I didn't love Thyla, but Vulpi was a chore to read and I was thoroughly tempted not to finish. The biggest thing that kept me going was the fact that I didn't want to be the first person to give Vulpi one star on Goodreads. Because I mean, who am I? Some uppity self-published nobody – Gordon's been traditionally published. She's actually had editors and presumably the experience to back up her publishing deal and grants.

Which is why the following writing really jars me so much:

(The spoiling parts are hidden by spoilers. If you don't mind spoilers, then by all means feel free to read them. Also please note – if you find absolutely nothing wrong with the following excerpts, then you will probably enjoy the book. Also note I only started taking notes after page 100.)

P117

There was a Diemen in front of me.

'Hello, sleepyhead,' the Diemen hissed.

'Piss off,' I said and clawed him in the neck. I never was a morning person.

As the Diemen slumped to the deck I looked around me.

I coughed as smoke flowed into my throat and nose. 'Delphi!' I yelled. I couldn't see anything through the dust and grit. 'Tessa!'

'Cat!' Help!' It was Delphi.

She was about ten metres away, towards the front of the boat. It wasn't far but I could hear fighting all around me, even if I couldn't see it. I could run straight into a Deimen. I could be killed.

But Delphi was in danger.

I steeled myself. I breathed out steadily.

And then I bolted.

P174

'Right!' Archie pulled up suddenly. I kept running. 'Oof!' Archie complained, jerking forwards.

'Sorry!' I cried. 'You just-'

‘Stopped awfully suddenly. Yes, I know.’

‘Why?’ I asked, rubbing the elbow that had collided with Archie’s ribs.

P177

‘Are you all right, Cat?’ Archie said. ‘I can feel you’re afraid.’

I nodded. ‘I am, a bit,’ I said.

He reached out and took my hand again. It felt like electricity was pulsing through it. ‘You’re afraid of what we are about to do,’ he said, nodding. I nodded back, even though it wasn’t entirely true. I was a bit apprehensive about what would happen next – whether we’d have to fight Diemens or even Vulpis, whether we’d find Isaac and Tessa alive – but what I was really afraid of was how my heart raced when I look at his face and how my body shivered when he touched me. ‘Cat, I believe you can do this,’ Archie said. ‘Take a leap. I think you’ll find you’ll fly.’

Archie squeezed my hand. ‘Of course, I could be completely wrong. You might fail spectacularly. But that’s all part of the adventure, isn’t it?’ And with that thought to comfort me, Archie dragged me out of the shadows, and into the light.

P202

(view spoiler)

P 232

‘True love, I suppose, looks past the colour of one’s fur,’ Archie replied.

‘Cat?’ I turned around. Isaac was standing behind us.

P264

‘And I haven’t!’ **Charlotte cried.** ‘I haven’t told a soul. I’ve held up my side of the bargain. Now you need to tell me what’s going on. And don’t bullshit me!’ **Charlotte cried.** ‘What happened? What’s happening now? I deserve to know.’

P280

(view spoiler)

P298

(view spoiler)

Before we move on, I just want to add that there was one small section of descriptive writing of a particularly gruesome nature that I did thoroughly enjoy reading. (view spoiler) It added a touch of the macabre and horror to the novel, which I appreciated. No shying away from stuff there. Awesome

Plot .5

First half 0

Second half 1

There was no plot in the first half of the book. The characters spent entirely too much time naval gazing. “Oh no, they’ve kidnapped Rhiannah! We’ve got to do something!” Cue no characters actually doing anything. Cue offpage action. Cue Cat being so fucking boring I wanted to tear my hair out. The introduction of Archie is when I actually started enjoying reading this. He doesn’t speak like an English person at all – LOL I should know, I dragged one here – but he’s funny and brave, if a little freakishly psychotic. (view spoiler)

Also? Picked the traitor from the first ‘hint’. I was surprised Cat didn’t. She reminded me too much of Tessa in her blind trusting nature. “Oh, maybe I have enemies, I’ll just blurt my secret to this girl because she’s different but she might be my enemy OH WELL!” Tessa asked the right questions, but didn’t put two and two together in her head. I know it was for the benefit of the reader to make the connections first, but with someone writing book 1 from second person point of view I would have thought there was more bravery and daring to be different in book 2 as well. Ah well, the tropes return.

Worldbuilding 1

I liked the addition of the Vulpis. It’s clever. It’s especially clever because I freaking LOVE foxes. Tasmania is the only place in the entire world bar Antarctica where you will not find foxes. That’s arguable I know, because in recent years people seem to think they’ve seen foxes jumping off shipping crates from Victoria and people claim to have found fox scats or DNA in the far south of the state... but I don’t think it’s true.

Anyway, I really liked how the shapeshifter myth was built. It’s not exactly original (view spoiler), and it’s far from believable, but it’s acceptable, and that’s all I ask for. Also, the Diemens aren’t as scary as I wanted them to be. (view spoiler)

Characters 0

I don’t like Cat. I don’t care about her. It was a huge risk taking the story from Tessa’s point of view to Cat’s point of view, and I don’t feel that it paid off. Cat is annoying and boring, part time damsel in distress and part time ass-kicker. Inconsistently. And the most annoying thing? That’s she’s a poseur who really had no reason to run away from home except that she didn’t want to be her mother’s daughter any more. That’d be cool, if say her mother was the mayor or the prime minister or a movie star. But Cat’s mum is a nobody police officer. Cat is an incredibly selfish character, and I can’t for the life of me figure out why two characters fall in love with her and a third makes sexual advances. I don’t find anything about her redeeming.

I also think she’s in love with Tessa. Tessa’s all she can think about. Tessa’s name revolves in her thoughts. You know how in Thyla Tessa’s mantra was woven throughout the novel? ‘I am Tessa, I am brave, I do not cry’? Well, Tessa’s name is woven through this narrative as well, except that it’s Cat thinking about Tessa and worrying about Tessa and obsessing about Tessa – and not in a ‘best friend’ kind of way. I mean something deeper than that. I also think that she’s in love with Tessa because she so firmly pushed Delphi away and tried to make it clear to the reading audience that she was straight. Well, I don’t buy it. Denial, much? Actions speak louder than words.

As for the wonderfully perfect Tessa: well, she was inconsistently written. She spoke quite strangely. I

suspect it was an attempt to make her seem old-timey in comparison to Cat's more modern headspace, but it just failed. It failed because she didn't speak like that in Thyla.

Archie was a good addition, but not for the 'romance'. He could answer a lot of questions, even if it did seem rather like an info dump most of the time.

and X-Factor .5

I didn't find very much about this book redeeming. Archie gets half a star for humour and dedication to a dislikeable character.

Overall

I didn't like Vulpi. That upsets me. It was extraordinarily close to being 1 star, but I only rate books I don't finish 1 star. I pushed through this book because of my loyalty to Tasmania and I was rewarded with Archie, which was pretty cool. And I genuinely believe that if you don't see the problems with the excerpted material I posted above, then you'll probably enjoy this novel, too, once you get past the extraordinarily non-eventful first half.

I wish Gordon all the best for book 3 and 4 (if there is one). I would really like to see one of the books from Charlotte Lord's point of view, and I doubt very much I will pick up book 3/4 unless that comes to pass. I can't say I trust Gordon yet – she sucker-punched me with Thyla and left me disappointed with Vulpi. It's totally awesome to see Tasmania get its own paranormal history but I'm in no rush whatsoever to read the next book.

Poppy Gee says

I really loved this book. I had not read Thyla, but that was okay, I understood enough to enjoy the novel. One of the characteristics of good writing is that you don't really notice the prose because you're so transported by the story: and that was very much the case for me with this novel. Lots of twists and turns, lovely Tasmania references. Can't wait til my daughter is old enough to enjoy it too.

Amanda says

2.5

Vulpi by Kate Gordon is the second book in the Thyla series. Vulpi picks up a couple of weeks after the events at the end of Thyla.

The story is told from Cat's point of view in this book. Tessa has returned to her pack of Thylas but she is still attending Cascade Falls College. Her friendship with Harriet, a Sarco, is now strained. Tessa encourages Cat to start a journal and one of the first things she writes down is an explanation of what makes a Thyla: they have blood that is half human and half thyla and while they don't age, severe wounds can kill them.

The Diemens are attacking more girls and kidnapping them and there's mention of The Solution, something the Diemens have been working on. The Thylas and the Sarcos need to form an alliance to stop the Diemens but both sides have issues with helping out their former enemies. And it's not just each other they have to

worry about, there are other shapeshifters to worry about, Vulpis.

I enjoyed listening to Cat as the narrator of Vulpi. She's a fairly intelligent girl but she's feeling lost and lonely. She desperately misses her mum, who isn't aware of her shapeshifting abilities, and since she has no home, Cat gets stuck minding the camp with fellow pack-member, Delphi. She often thinks of her dad and the mystery of what happened to him is revealed over the course of the story. Cat begins having dark dreams as well as seeing flashes of copper in the bush and later she meets Archie, a Vulpi, who came to Tasmania from England.

Cat's supporting cast were an interesting bunch of characters. Fans of Tessa will be pleased to know that she plays a part in the second book as well as her love interest, Perrin, but their forbidden romance doesn't take over the story. Delphi was a character that really grated on me, she was extremely overprotective of Cat and was too quick to act in some (most) situations. Archie was a stereotypical, old-fashioned, Englishman but also provided us with a history on how Vulpis, and other shapeshifters, came into existence and it was great to find out more about the world that Kate has created.

Vulpi was action-packed making it a very different novel from Thyla and it does have quite a dark feel to it, especially the scenes involving the Diemens. It definitely didn't have typical second-book-in-a-series issues such as no plot accompanied by a cliffhanger. I found parts of it predictable as I was sure I knew who the traitors were from the beginning but I was surprised at the end when I found out I was wrong about one character and my speculations about what had happened to Cat's father were also incorrect.

Vulpi is a good follow up to Thyla with more action and world building as well as new characters. While I wasn't as invested in it as I was in Thyla, I am sure paranormal fans will find it a fun read. It's available online for overseas readers and in local book stores for Aussies.

Casey Anderson says

Kinda tore through this one, for me. But I loved it. If you enjoyed Thyla you'll enjoy Vulpi. The main character switches which at first annoyed me but it was a continuation of the story, not just a different view of the same thing. I really enjoyed the different character development of this, the new main character as well as development for the previous books main character. And I just love the creatures and the world. I'm super upset she hasn't seemed to write another one yet, and nothing on her website mentions one in the works! Alas.

I haven't read a book in awhile that made me want to *be* something, and right now I kind of want to be a Thyla or a Sarco!

Anita says

[My opinion, following reading Kate's latest blog post, is that the blurb for this novel isn't quite ... right. It seems to suggest that Cat Connolly is, like Tessa, a Thyla, when in Kate's blog post, she has written that Cat is actually a Vulpi, which is a fox-transformer (wrong word, I know. I've forgotten the other one ... oh! Shape-shifter!). I'm not sure how I feel about Tessa no longer being the narrator, but it will certainly be interesting to get a different point of view,

Kelly Gleeson says

Hmm, another slow to get into book.

An OK book in an OK series. My life is not any better from reading this series at all.

It was an interesting idea of Thylas, Sacros and Vulpis but I really think that plot could have had a lot more depth.

Not one that I will be adding to my personal library.

Shirley Marr says

My heavens, what a beautiful cover!

Cillian oooooohhh Cillian my kitten, come and check this out my darling one:)

Cecilia says

Revelations abound, ice Queens start to melt and new love starts to blossom. Vulpi is one heck of a ride!

Vulpi is the stunning second installment in Gordon's brilliant Thyla series set in picturesque Tasmania and yet again she has squarely hit her mark. I absolutely adored the first in the series "Thyla" and its main protagonist Tessa, so it was with some trepidation that I set out on this whole new adventure with a whole new lead in Cat. I really didn't expect Cat to worm her way into my heart with as much speed and conviction as Tessa did but Cat totally knocked me for six. I simply could not put this down and devoured it in less than 24 hours. Gordon has managed to not only bring a whole new perspective to her world but has superbly crafted another powerhouse lead who again grasps our full attention from the very first sentence and stands firmly in the spotlight in her own right. Yes we do still get to catch up with Tessa and the rest of our unique and delightful shape-shifting crew, but Cat maintains a firm voice and the experience of seeing this strange new world through Cat's eyes is as exhilarating as it was through Tessa's.

This time the focus is more centered around the ongoing war with the Diemen's and the action is certainly knocked up another ante. The plot is thick, fast and furious and life with the Thyla's is certainly not for the faint hearted. Gordon's gift for not only bringing a story to life but for mixing history (both real and the slightly "twisted") with the here and now is again at the forefront. Visually rich and intoxicating, this is a world you'll instantly find yourself fully transported to and often not wanting to leave. And for those of you who love a good literary crush, keep your eyes out for a certain "foxy" fox- he's sure to scamper away with a little piece of your heart. Unfortunately it looks like another agonizing wait for the next installment but this series is certainly a world I'm happy to re-visit and re-read again and again. If you haven't read Thyla yet I highly recommend you do before embarking on Vulpi, the experience will be all the more richer.

And to Kate, thanks for bringing this ex-pat Tassie girl a unique and enthralling taste of "home" once again.

Hannah Elms says

I loved it because there were so many twists and turns! I never expected Charlotte to be good and Hatch to be bad and Delphi to become a diemen! Every time a shock was revealed I literally jumped up and screamed! My favourite character was Archie because I loved his olden days charm. Also I am very happy that Cat and her Mum are together again! I wish there was a third book, so yeah, loved it!

Jane Tea says

Vulpi. Awesome title! It's the second novel of the Thyla series, and man, did I love the first novel! How awesome was it? So of course, I expected a lot from it! And well, it was a really good read! The novel was great, and I love how even though Tessa isn't a main character anymore, she's still important to the story and important to the character development of Cat. (Love Tessa!!) The development of Cat's character (the main character in this novel) was really well done. I got to see hoe she really, sort of I guess, come out of her shell and really become a great character to read about. Anyway, the novel is great and you should definately read it! (As well as the first if you haven't already!)

Lizz Smith says

Firstly, I declare my bias: Kate Gordon and I were at school together and I consider her a friend. And I don't read a great deal of YA fiction or fantasy fiction so I'm not the best qualified to comment. But here goes.

Although it is only a year later, Vulpi strikes me as a much more mature novel than its prequel and I can see strong development in Kate as a writer. I had felt that the battle scenes in Thyla were a bit under-written- it almost felt as though she was a bit afraid of being too graphic so shyed away from any detail at all- and although I would have perhaps appreciated more detail, I can understand that this would perhaps be inappropriate for the market.

I liked the character of Cat and the further development of Charlotte, Isaac/Vinnie and Connelly. I felt that Cat had a stronger voice than Tessa in Thyla, but was less "writerly". This could be due to Tess being essentially a historical character and so more work, and Cat being contemporary through and through.

The sense of place in Vulpi seemed stronger than in Thyla, but without being as specific. Over-specifying location in novels annoys me. Its the primary reason that I hate Christos Tsolkis' "The Slap". I didn't get annoyed at all in the geographic placing in Vulpi at all.

I wish there was a "half star" option in Goodreads! Vulpi deserves an extra half.

The SlapThyla

Nansi Kunze says

Kate Gordon manages the tricky task of making a sequel even more exciting than the first very well in this follow-up to Thyla. Told from a different point of view than the first book, Vulpi continues the tale of Tessa, the Thylas and the Sarcos, but brings new characters, new twists and a new level of intensity to the series. Highly recommended!

Kirstyn-maree says

The dramatic sequel to 'Thyla' Vulpi is the story of young cat who discovers things about herself and her history as the war between Thylas and Sarcos threatens to ignite. A supernatural, action filled adventure for anybody into supernatural books.

Steve lovell says

Brave young ladies are marching off into my island's primeval forests to hold the line against those who would wish to deprive future generations of their magnificence – a magnificence that has been present in our wilderness since well before the tread of humankind. They stand before towering, monstrous machines; they shackle themselves to Kingdom Plantae giants and they gird themselves for long stays in flimsy constructions in the canopy. Why one has even become the iconic Angel of the Weld!

Perhaps as tribute to these feisty protestors, author Kate Gordon has put together a female assemblage of another kind, yet one sharing the notion that here on our island in the southern seas we possess a way of life that is worth protecting to the end of our very being – be that the threat of the travesty that is unfettered forest destruction, or the dastardly intentions of those dark Diemens, the epitome of all that is sinister on our planet.

Gordon is a savvy writer and is prepared to take risks in her chosen vocation. It would have been very easy to continue her saga of goodness v the demonic with the spunky Tessa as our constant guide, following on from her acclaimed (on Goodreads) first book in the series, 'Thyla'. She, though, has chosen another to be the mouthpiece to narrate her epic battles, Cat. It took this reader a while to warm to this new voice, but Gordon deliberately 'grows' this Thyla as the story continues, and one soon becomes smitten. Old friends are back and we learn how Tessa and Perrin are progressing, although this relationship is not to the fore as some of a more romantic bent perhaps would wish. New heroes, new villains are introduced, the most successful creation being the wonderful throwback to Blighty in the verbose vulpine Archie – his olde worlde charms and turn of phrase are one of 'Vulpi's' true highlights. And then there are the vile titular shapeshifters! Gordon knows her target audience well; keeping her language at all times accessible, being prepared to forsake adult-driven gongs to truly appeal – and the novel does. It's just right for those on the cusp of teenagerdom through to, well, in this case, sixty plus year olds.

There are dark passages and violence a-plenty, more so than in 'Thyla', but such is the author's sureness of touch these are not dwelt on for sensationalism, but quickly bypassed as the narrative rollicks on.

As was the case seen in 'Thyla', with its historic slant, Gordon throws in references to tempt a teenager to inquire further – 'Dad, who's Guy Clark?', 'Mum, who are Heathcliffe and Mr Darcy?' or perhaps, 'Please sir, what's a misogynist?' And to please this reader, another romance of sorts is developed.

Towards the end a few characters start to emerge from the background giving indication they may play more prominent roles in the continuation of this intriguing journey on the dark side. So please Random House, don't keep us in suspense for too long, for there is so much that we need to discover and unravel.

Those who enjoy Marsden's masterful yarns of teenagerhood as national protectors as well as the shapeshifting shenanigans of the 'True Blood' franchise and its ilk, will thrive on the efforts of this author who continues to be a fresh voice for the genre, as even some American readers are discovering online. May I question, though, as to whether our author is also having a sly poke at our state's government and the millions it has spent on attempting to discover the existence of a certain wily feral, but only finding a few tantalizing hints and nary a 'flash of orange'?

Yes she makes this reader wish he could shapeshift into his favourite totem, or even better, become a 'freewalker'. Well done Ms Gordon and kudos to her publisher for continuing to have faith in young Australian literary talent!

Kash says

Again, I don't remember when I read this, but I remember quite liking it.
