



## Love's Prey

*Meg Xuemei X*

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## **Love's Prey** Meg Xuemei X

Xirena hasn't smiled in years. People whisper horrible things about her wherever she goes. She is so different from what her backwoods society expects of her. Then she meets Kai, the smoking hot seventeen-year-old next door. All the girls are swooning over him, but he is captivated by enigmatic Xirena.

She can't deny the magnetic attraction between them, but when Kai falls for her, she steels herself against him, not wanting to believe life can be different than the misery she has lived and envisions for her future. The prospect of trusting someone, of allowing them to enter her secret, innermost core, is unimaginable. But Kai won't give her up. He recognizes her as his kindred spirit and will go as far as one can go to prove his love for her.

This unforgettable tale of first love will capture your heart and leave you breathless. Read Xirena and Kai's love story now for a unique, unparalleled experience.

## **Love's Prey Details**

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# From Reader Review Love's Prey for online ebook

## Courtney Whittamore- The Moral of our Stories says

Fire and ice. Light and dark. Love and hate. These are the ties that have held the universe together throughout the history of human existence. One of these things cannot exist without its paring. And in return neither could mankind. We have come to discover that we crave the warmth of the fire but when we get too close, yearn for the snap of frost. We want our lives to be lived in the light, with our spirits free to be what they were destined to become, but when too much is revealed of our sins which always swiftly follow the discovery of our victories, we so wish to cloak ourselves in the darkness we once loathed. We yearn to love, yet find it so much easier to hate. For when we have tasted love, the real, unfathomable core of love that only comes to the luckiest of us, we cannot stand to face what life would be like should we lose it. So we choose to hate, for hate is what protects us. At least this is the code by which Xirena has lived her entire life.

Xirena never smiled. In fact, she could count the years on both hands that have come and gone without her smile gracing their presence. See, Xirena didn't have anything she felt worthy of that gesture of happiness because she herself, and the life around her, were completely devoid of the sentiment. Aptly dubbed the Ice Queen by her classmates, Xirena had no problem taking on the role that the moniker bared. Her looks emanated frost, stopping anyone and anything from getting in the way of her one and only mission in life, which was to get good grades and get the heck out of dodge. No complications meant no reason to stay, that is, until the good looking Kai stepped across her path and planted himself in the middle of it.

Kai was the town's most sought after guy. He had his own studio, in which the door and the windows were always left open, allowing for anyone to come and go as they pleased. It was common knowledge that he was an artist; so many a model would sweep in and out of his painting studio so that he could create his masterpieces. He also had a knack for always getting what he wanted, and when he laid eyes on Xirena, he immediately knew that she was just what he was looking for.

When Kai brazenly approaches the otherwise unapproachable Xirena and asks her if he could paint her portrait, she is struck with confusion on the inside, but still cold as ice on the outside. Why would someone who could have the pick of the most attractive women in town want to paint her? She never thought that she was anything special and by default, treated herself that way. She figured since she was treated so poorly by everyone else, then maybe she should just try and keep her head down until she could flee this place that always seemed to be humming about her, falsely accusing her of committing the most wild of acts. She saw herself as nothing extraordinary, but Kai saw otherwise, and was determined to make her see herself as he did.

Throughout the story Kai is determined to break Xirena out from the icicle she has incased herself in by offering her his friendship. But as they spend time together, with much reluctance on the part of Xirena, Kai's insatiable need for her grows, and it becomes apparent to them both that this relationship will soon become anything but platonic. While still frosty as ever on the outside, Xirena, to her own surprise, begins to feel sparks in her heart and warmth in her chest at the site of Kai. She often finds herself gazing at him through her window, as his studio is just across the way and in plain view. She is able to account for all his comings and goings because as he frequently liked to point out to her, he was an open book, and therefore so was his home. That is until Xirena and Kai begin to meet alone in his studio. When Xirena is present, he finds himself compelled to close up the studio, realizing that he is doing so because he wants her all to himself, and Xirena discovering within herself that she didn't quite mind that this is how he felt. But she assured herself that she would never let him know that he was slowly thawing her heart. She was absolutely

sure she was keeping up her façade, until she discovered she was smiling at him.

But as all love comes with a significant price, Xirena and Kai cannot be together, for he is seventeen and she is underage, at the age of fourteen. The ramifications of their trysts being discovered, even if they were mild, were of the steepest sort. Xirena would be expelled from school and barred from taking the qualifying tests required to enter University, which had been Xirena's escape plan all along. She would also be branded a whore, and Kai a pervert. As if those obstacles were not tall enough, Kai came from a very well off family, which meant that his family would be involved in the choosing of his bride, whom they had conveniently already chosen. It's a tale as old as time. A forbidden love, that come the fires of hell or the frost of the arctic, they were determined to find a way to bring to life.

Author Meg Xuemei X does an extremely seamless job at telling a tale that could easily have replicated so many before hers. She does not simply play into the love affair and the happy and warm moments, but rather leans into the moments of withdrawal, uncertainty, insecurity, and distrust that come from an encounter with your first love. Xuemei aptly displays the conflicted heart of a girl who once yearned to give her heart away, but after it being revoked over and over again decided to incase it in ice, so that no one could ever hurt her again. It is a universal theme that all women experience at some point. We all see our inadequacies instead of our worth. We shy away when we feel we are entering into something that while yes, could be wonderful, will probably be a flame short lived, and tamper with the idea that maybe it is better to not have loved at all, than to have loved and lost.

The dynamic she creates between her characters is electrifying, so much to the point that you can feel the static seeping in through your fingertips. Every page is laced with passion and high stakes emotions, emotions that at times you find yourself feeling right along with the pair. There are moments where your heart will soar at the thought of their happy ending, and then feel as if it is being pulled out of your chest at the stench of possible betrayals, miscommunications, and the potential loss of a pure love.

It also should be noted that Xuemei has created a female lead that does not need saving. She is capable of saving herself and does not once look to Kai to be her savior. She only craves to be his equal and his partner. While he gives her the priceless gift to see herself as she truly is, and not what she has been conditioned to see herself as by the naysayers of the town and her family, she does not rely on him for her freedom. Because of his assurance in her worth, she sees that she is worthy of a life equal of that to the beauty that she not only displays on the outside, but possess on the inside. He is her avenue toward freedom, but it is Xirena who walks that avenue with the intent to change her life.

The use of fire and ice is also something that separates this story from that of the dime a dozen romance novel. Xirena had held on to her coldness in pride, until she comes across Kai who is all fire, blazing bright for everyone to see. There is an inner turmoil that arises in her because she knows that his fire will destroy her chill, and she must decide which one she will sacrifice for the other. Just as darkness must be sacrificed for light and hate sacrificed for love. The journey to that discovery is full of pitfalls and mountain peaks, but in the end it is always realized that it is a journey worth the climb. I give this book 5 out of 5 stars. I appreciated the connection I was able to make with the characters and the life that Xuemei breathed into them. It is well worth the read and is a story that will stick with you long after the last page is turned.

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## **Wesley says**

To be honest, I wasn't expecting much from this book, but read it on a recommendation. I'm not generally a fan of teen romance dramas. I was fully expecting a book of tired clichés and predictable characters. I was pleasantly surprised.

Love's Prey is a well-written, young adult, coming-of-age romance that centers on Xirena and Kai. I felt that, unlike in many other novels of this genre, the characters, particularly Xirena, were three-dimensional and believable, and the events of the story actually had a real effect on the characters. Xirena and Kai were fleshed-out and relatable, and we, as the reader, are able to quickly grow to care for and even empathize with them. I was also happy that the story was able to steer clear of the archetypal characterizations and stereotypical literary tropes that generally plague the genre.

Overall, Love's Prey was an enjoyable read, and definitely a stand-out in the genre.

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## **Renee says**

I do not know if this book should be a favorite of mine or not... I liked this book yet it has a different writing style that made it intriguing and a little detached. Not that these things are bad it just made the book different. I enjoyed reading about another culture type and the building of trust between two more-than-friends "couple"(?). I do not know what to classify them as...

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## **Carrie Felton says**

### **Beautiful writing!**

I loved this story so much. I am pretty sure I lost a lot of little cultural signifiers but the writing and description, which I'm not usually fond of, was beautiful. I would recommend it to anyone and everyone who can really appreciate good writing because this book has it. The story itself is not particularly amazing, though it is good and definitely entertaining and I really enjoyed it. The descriptions and emotions are the best part of this book. I loved it.

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## **Angel Chen says**

"I am fourteen and I haven't smiled in years. My mother used to punch my face for that. So when the new neighbor boy approaches me and asks, "Will you pose for me? I'd like to paint your portrait," I shoot him a glacial look." Wow, the opening line caught my attention immediately. But this story isn't about abuse; it's about love.

Xirena has the coldest eyes, and everyone thinks she has the coldest heart, too. Only one boy sees her differently. He's her complete opposite. She's ice; he's fire. She's a closed book; he's wide open. He's well-dressed and smoldering hot; she wears baggy clothes and has only two winter outfits. She's the proud outcast who never apologizes for her attitude; he's friendly, artistic, and a real lady's man. The only thing she has is

her brilliant mind and photographic memory.

When his fire crushes against her hard ice, there's resistance. And then there's spark. And when the fire finally gets the upper hand and melts the ice, there's disaster.

This novel is addictive if you're addicted to love. I loved the way the author gives a classic love story a modern touch and leaves the readers wanting more.

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### **R.K. says**

If the title alone doesn't seduce you into wanting to read "Love's Prey," meeting its edgy and engaging heroine on the first page should do the job. I've never before encountered a voice quite like Xirena's in fiction (imagine something like the edginess of Lisbeth Salander combined with the strength and vulnerability of Katniss Everdeen).

This book also provides the fascinating window into contemporary Chinese society and the challenges a teenage girl can face there. If you're looking for an original and realistic romance with a feminist heart, you won't do any better than this unique and touching novel.

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### **Cosmas says**

I haven't read a book for quite a while but from the first chapter this book has been so intriguing. The way that the author describes the plot and the characters is so vivid and every word is like a picture in my head. Definitely a great addition to my book collection! Highly recommended !!

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### **Cigi says**

I give this book four stars only due to two issues. There was too many things left unanswered in the story for me and the writing skipped around too much. One moment something would be going on then suddenly I wouldn't understand where the story jumped. I'd have to stop and re-read, trying to find where the transition happened.

However if you're into romances with a strong female character, this is still a good story. I love non-sappy romances and that is what this is. Still enough romance but the girl can kick ass herself if need be. Though the story jumped, the writing was still decent beside that. It was blunt and strong. I just wish there had been more things covered.

In the end this book will eventually be read again by me.

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### **Jannat Bhat says**

Love's Prey was an unusual and unexpected story. I mean of course we have stories of domestic violence but

I've never read anything quite like this. Xire's upbringing hasn't been ideal. Been blamed and suspected for crimes she didn't commit she becomes a social pariah.

Years of being on the receiving end of mental and physical abuse she becomes numb. She doesn't let anyone get a reaction out of her. She becomes what everyone calls the Ice girl. That is until Kai comes into the picture. Where Xire is ice and cold Kai is fire and warmth. And who could resist warmth after being in cold so long? Kai can't help but be drawn to this girl people have spent years steering clear off. While everyone thinks her to be plainer than plain jane including herself Kai sees her to be unique and exotic. He does everything to warm up to her, to melt the ice walls around her heart and mind. Their love isn't easy. Like every good love story Xire & Kai share their own set of problems. Xire's suspicions about almost everything and Kai's mother against their relationship is just a few of them.

Overall I really enjoyed this book. I simply flew through the pages. The writing was easy and the concept of true love really great. You sure would want to give this one a try.

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### **Sarah says**

Downloaded for free from Amazon.co.uk

This was a YA romance story about a fourteen-year-old girl.

Xirena was quite a sullen girl, and the bullying she faced from everyone, including her own mother wasn't very nice. Being labelled a 'slut' for skinny-dipping seemed unfair, and it wasn't surprising that she tried to keep people away to stop them from hurting her more.

The storyline in this was about the relationship between Xirena and the 17-year-old boy next door – Kai. I did find it a little creepy that a 17-year-old boy wanted to date a 14-year-old girl though, even if they weren't having sex. Xirena did hold back a bit at times, even in this relationship though, and the abuse she suffered at her mother's hands, and the reputation she had to put up with were quite awful.

The ending to this was a happily ever after, although I did wonder (view spoiler)

6 out of 10

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### **Meerfantom says**

Meg Xuemei's 'Love's Prey' is a delightful breath of freshness that will sweep you off your feet. Fans of the romance genre will especially appreciate this story of a untenable teenage love story set in contemporary China.

'Love's Prey' is dimensional with meaning--it is romantic, dramatic and theatrical, but the human values are universal and deeply identifiable all the same. The story centers around fourteen year old Xirena, an ambitious girl with a troubled past, who becomes the object of affection by Kai, a seventeen year old boy with a reputation of womanizing. The initial rejections by Xirena, Kai's burning desire for Xirena, the

challenges to their relationship by their community and families, and finally the passion that develops between the two, make this story a palpable tale that lingers in our thoughts.

I love the character development of Xirena and the culminated relationship that ensues with Kai. Xuemei's portrayal of the characters' desires and struggles, although happening in modern China, are brought to life in a manner that can be related to by anyone, anywhere. Xuemei truly develops her characters into "real", three-dimensional personalities you can empathize with.

Overall, this is a deeply memorable book that you can savor in a few days. If anything, 'Love's Prey' made me yearn for more work from this Xuemei – and I hope she produces more similar works. At any rate, a highly recommended read to fans of the romantic genre with a Chinese setting. Get a copy—today.

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### **Sandra Lopez says**

“As its coldness pierces me, I flinch back from my reflection. I was once a cheerful kid, but all I have now is a cold shell, with a colder heart. I put down the mirror, telling myself what I've become now doesn't matter. In two more years, I'll go away to college and leave this dump. In between, I want no complications.” (17)

Xirena is the girl with “the coldest eyes I've ever seen,” according to the neighbors.

The reader will be curiously drawn to Xirena's dark and flippant personality. The origin of her “slut” nickname was beautifully descriptive and heart-wrenching. Having to deal with strict parents, controlling siblings, harassing peers, and physical violence, is it any wonder why she is the way she is? But “ambiguity is a form of art in Chinese culture. It's a required survival skill.” (81) Nonetheless, it was her skillful street-fighting abilities and unwavering determination that made her stand out in triumph. From then on, she was the “black sheep” that everyone stayed away from—everyone except Kai, who “sees something else... beneath the crudeness.” (40)

The story reads almost like a poem with the curt and pensive sentences. It almost feels like a haiku—a Chinese haiku (which are actually Japanese). Like the weather, these words expressed both the sensitivity and brutality of humans against the backdrop of lovely China.

I was able to relate to Xirena in several ways: her plain features, her anti-social stature, her disregard for everyone's opinions, her comedic nonchalance and smart-ass remarks, and, most of all, her fascination for the arts. No one would think it from the looks of her, but she is actually very smart (I absolutely know the feeling!)

Believing that he should find some other girl, Xirena refuses to see that she is the honey that Kai is sweet on. His patient persistence was admirable and too sweet to ignore. There was no doubt that he was the artist with a poet's heart and that he would do anything to protect Xirena.



A well-written and unlikely love story between Shakespeare's Romeo and the Wicked Witch of the East. This was an interesting tale told from a China girl "born with a pair of slanted eyes that struggled to see the world." (152)

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## **D<sup>2</sup> says**

2.5 stars

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## **Jessica Nicole says**

4.5 stars

"[Kai] treats every girl with the same politeness and apathy. I've been able to hear the boys' conversations by reading their lips. Kai placed a bet with them that he'd never fall for any girl. It makes the girls want to catch him with their long, sexy claws all the more. I'm mildly interested in watching this battle of the sexes. Something tingles in my head. My sixth sense flares. I know that he's standing by his window now, his eyes trained on me. My mind orders me not to move, reminding me, *Haven't you said you don't want complications?* But my feet run to my window. I need to confirm the accuracy of my sixth sense. Indeed! He leans against the windowsill. Spotting me, his eyes light up, and a broad smile breaks out across his face."

-Kingle Loc 208

*Love's Prey* is the story of Xirena, a horribly abused fourteen year old with dreams of being an astronaut, and her love for the boy painter next door. Kai is the summer sun to her winter snow, and she doesn't know how to let him in enough to thaw her icy heart. As a social outcast, Xirena trusts no one, and for good reason; not only is she abused at home, but her entire town is against her.

Keep Reading...

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## **Tasha says**

I could tell you all sorts of things about this stories but the things I could tell you, you would be able to read in anyone elses review of this book. So here is what I will tell you is that this is a book beyond words. What I mean by that is once you start reading your mind blanks from the here and now and you become a part of the story almost as if you see what is really happening right in front of you. This is one of those books that words don't do it justice, reading and seeing does it all the justice it deserves.

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