



## **Y Negative**

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In the last surviving cities of a ruined world, the concept of “woman” has been forgotten to history. Those unfortunate enough to lack a Y chromosome live as second-class citizens in a world dominated by mascs.

Ember is Y negative. He is scorned, bullied, abused by every masc he encounters, at work and at the gym. Not even his Y negative roommate cuts him any slack. He wants so desperately to be accepted as a masc that he'd rather buy black market testosterone than food. Something's gotta give—he needs a change in his life, but has no idea how to find it.

Jess is a masc with a passion for studying the recovery of their devastated world. His boyfriend is pressuring him for more commitment, and his father expects him to take over the family business. He can't wait to get away from civilization for his seasonal research out in the wild.

When Jess offers Ember a job, their lives collide in the isolated wasteland, and their initial attraction turns into a relationship that horrifies those around them. Soon their struggle to stay together and to be who they are turns into a fight for their lives.

## **Y Negative Details**

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Author : Kelly Haworth

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## From Reader Review Y Negative for online ebook

### Wart Hill says

*I received a free ARC from the publisher*

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Woah.

Forget a two gender social system. The world of Y Negative is more like a four gender social system. First in the hierarchy are Mascos - genetically male. Next are the Exins who are genetically male but have some genetic abnormalities that makes them more feminine. Then there are Andros - born genetically female, they have surgery to remove their breasts and inject testosterone. Last, Y Negatives, genetic females before they finish their work as surrogates and are allowed surgery and male hormones.

It is one fucked up world. To say the least.

To me, it seems that most of the Andros we meet inject testosterone and live as Andros more to fit in with society than as a need to be mascos. One of the main characters, Ember, definitely feels more like he is a masc trapped not only in the wrong body but in a society that degrades and uses people like him until they are, basically, nothing at all. It's no wonder that much of Ember's life is given to taking testosterone and working out, trying to make himself as masculine as he possibly can despite his genetics.

I almost gave up on this book after the first chapter. Because in this world Andros inject testosterone intravenously which is a **HUGE NO NO DON'T EVER DO THAT**. Testosterone injections should be intramuscular. Now, this sort of gets explained with regards to black market testosterone, which is laced with (view spoiler). Add to that the fact that black market Testosterone is cheaper than medical grade and the fact that Andros are so low in the social class that affording medical grade is nigh on impossible and, well...You get the picture pretty well.

Now, the reason I'm still withholding a star despite the above spoilery explanation is that it's never made clear whether or not medical grade T is injected intravenously or intramuscularly. I'm thinking it's still intravenously which. Well. ehhh. I can't. I can't give you that star back, book. It skeeves me out to think of Andros injecting Testosterone like it's an opiate. Especially since T shots are referred to as shooting up frequently (not just by mascos). I get that, within the world, I do...I just don't get why even the medical grade T shots are intravenous. (If they are?)

**ETA:** I just had a very interesting conversation with the author of this book, who told me about some of the things about Testosterone that she uncovered in her research and how T shots used to be IV instead of IM which, given how backwards this society is, kind of works really well here. So. With that information, I'm upping my rating to five stars.

Okay. so now that that \*waves hand\* is out of the way and y'all know what bothered me, let's get on to the stuff that didn't. Which is most of the rest of the book, so.

Ember's life isn't going terribly well. As we already established, he spends more money than is wise on Testosterone. Add to that the fact that his business isn't doing terribly well and, well. You can probably

figure that one out. Until a masc named Jess offers him a job - a month out in the wild lands beyond the civilization that's been built up since...whatever happened to this world happened. They need someone to help fix the sensor arrays and what not that they're using to monitor the world and see how well it's doing at putting itself back together.

Out in the outskirts with four mascs, things get a lot different. Not only is Ember stuck in close quarters with a couple - Gene and Kacy - who want to ask him questions about surrogacy (a subject which, understandably, isn't something Ember wants to think about) and the type of masc he's used to (one who belittles him simply for being who he is) he also finds himself attracted to Jess.

Andro/Masc relationships are referred to as "het" because of the difference in genetics. And, while not illegal, being het is very much frowned upon. It's considered disgusting for a masc and an andro to be together. So mostly Ember tries to ignore his feelings, but that gets harder when it seems like Jess returns them.

During a heavy rainstorm that means they're stuck inside (the rain in this world is acidic and all their power comes from solar panels), Jess and Ember start exploring the possibility of a relationship. Heath is disgusted, so are Gene and Kacy.

But there are other problems in the outskirts than just acid rain, wild animals reestablishing themselves, and no gym (yeah, Ember has priorities). There are also people, scavengers who left the cities and live out on their own, stealing what they have to to survive. They try to raid the headquarters where the group is staying and there's a gun fight and things don't go terribly well.

(view spoiler)

After their parting, Ember has to do some soul searching and self examination. Not just about what he's learned about his hormones, but about everything and who he is and what it means to not be genetically male while still trying to be a man. Is he a man despite his genetics? Does he matter, despite the entire world telling him he doesn't, not now that he's done his service?

Is he worth Jess risking everything for him?

There are a lot of questions in this book. A lot of interesting things to look at. From Negatives in the scavenger camps who don't inject - one who even goes so far as to look down on and judge Ember for doing so (It can be argued that this is more due to the laced nature of the T, but it read to me more like a judgment against the practice itself, which adds an interesting layer to an already complicated scenario in this book), to the fact that mascs are constantly trying to prove themselves masculine enough.

There is so much in this world and it's all so interesting and the author does an amazing job of bringing it all to life.

And in the end, Ember and Jess want to change it. And I'd love to find out if they do.

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**Sheziss says**

This book.

Is special.

In so many ways. Man, this really rocked my world for a few days. I read it slowly because I was studying very hard for the exams but I couldn't put it down when it was (more than) time to go to sleep. The cover doesn't do justice, this tale is more than a story or two. It's about Ember and the world he lives in. A world divided by genetics, full of dangers and disdain from the mascs towards the Y negatives, the lowest of the food chain. In between we have the andros, Y negatives who have already served the purpose of continuing the species with their bodies. They inject testosterone in order to fit into society and look more "normal". But it's a society they will never fully belong to. It's a battle lost before they even begin it. They will always be disregarded and considered less than human. They will always be used and pushed aside. Mascs will never consider them equals and even less bond with them.

The world is so well built it felt like a movie. I related it to Blade Runner, with bodily paints with flavor as a plus but with the same look-where-are-you-stepping-on feeling. Ember doesn't dream of electric sheep. He dreams of becoming a masc and being close to one. An impossible aim. He has desires he is afraid to acknowledge out loud but that doesn't stop him from dreaming. Because he knows there is no hope to fulfill them. But still, he goes on, he works out in the gym and struggles to earn his next testosterone dosis rather than eating real food. Misery in the whole sense of the word. Because when Tuesdays come, he feels like a man, although this feeling is not enduring. I could feel his loneliness as a stone, his emptiness and his longings sharp like a knife. He indeed left a mark on me.

Despite this, life goes on, and we get glimpses of what being an andro implies, how they barely have a decent existence. How they get by with the constant abuse and the reminder that they will never be enough for the rest of the world. The author managed to slap me in the face once and again, moving me in ways I never expected her to. I wanted so badly for things to change, as much as Ember does. And they do. Suddenly there is a masc, Jess, at his door, offering him a job for several weeks. A job that takes him apart from everything he has ever known, alone with 4 mascs with no way to escape. Sounds like the best plan. He clutches the straw and agrees.

The Outskirts are dangerous, and Law takes a whole different meaning out of the big cities where people manage to survive. But what is even more dangerous is the proximity he feels towards Jess, by each passing day. The atmosphere turns into something more intimate at this instance, more secluded, and more meaningful that everything they have ever experienced. It was beautiful to see their struggles, the conflicts and the sweet surrender to each other and to themselves.

I truly loved Jess but I think he wasn't wholly developed as a character. Sometimes the author skipped parts of his personality and scenes that could have been so much more. We was such a faint-hearted guy I wanted to shake him up now and then. Still, I could see he had never been one to harm other people just for the sake of it, as other mascs do for fun or to fit a certain mold. But he has never been brave enough to break said mold and swim in the opposite direction. He is quiet and thoughtful, letting others take the reins and adapting to their wishes when the moment requires it. But when he meets Ember, he feels alive for the first time in

his life, which fills him with confusion and doubts. He wants to get closer, but at the same time he knows shit will hit the fan the moment he makes a movement. Is Ember worthy of it all? Or is it better to keep blending and silencing his needs and resigning himself to what people have always been expecting of him?

I was truly enchanted with it all. The writing style drew me in with no effort at all. The environment is ugly but uncannily attractive at the same time. There is that special magic in the air, the certainty that something significative and beautiful will happen eventually. And it does. Along the hopelessness, there are bright moments and wonderful insights of the MCs' minds. I wanted to dwell on it forever. The story covered me like a warm blanket, it's a feeling I don't usually have while I read post-apocalyptic books, but there was a familiar comfort here.

Yes, it's a bizarre story, that with the androgynous character and all that he has to go through. I think this is the first ambiguous MC I have ever read. The events and the characters' actions are not the ones I waited for. They just came, never following a certain scheme. The story just flowed and I just devoted myself in reading and reading. I love it when authors don't restrain their imagination and creativeness. Because even though after a while I realize nothing that occurs in this book is really original in the big scheme of things, I still felt I had never heard of them before.

No, it's not perfect. I must admit there were some moments which felt too strange for me. For instance: (view spoiler) apart from that I could find a scene or two that felt a little lacking because they left things unexplained and unsolved. But overall, I must say this is a pretty solid read, and that managed to take my mind elsewhere.

\*\*\*\*

*\*\*\*Copy provided by the publisher via NetGalley in exchange for an honest review.\*\*\**

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### **Frau Sorge (Yuki) says**

DNF @ 55%

I rarely flounce. But this time I just couldn't read on.

I'm sorry.

It's a great story, just not for me.

Flounced - no rating.

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### **Paula Berinstein says**

I absolutely loved this book. Although a little confusing at first, it completely absorbed me and I found that I couldn't put it down. I read it with a buddy, and we talked about it for hours.

Yes, there are issues that aren't completely developed, but that's what sequels are for. I just found Ember so endearing and the romance so compelling that none of that matters. And the premise--so interesting! What an imagination the author has, and what a great storyteller she is.

This isn't a story for nitpickers, but if you're the kind of person who can suspend disbelief, I highly recommend it!

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### **Elsbeth says**

Imagine a world with only one gender, the *male*. Only gay relationships. There would be no need to bigot or discriminate any longer, right?

### **WRONG!!**

In this Dystopia world the male gender is divided into 4 sub-genders:

- 1 – The M asc s, they are truly 100% genetically male
- 2 – The E xins, also genetically male but with some abnormalities that makes them more feminine.
- 3 – The A ndros, Y-negatives (genetically female) that have endured being surrogates for the human population and now are allowed to remove their breasts and start injecting male hormones.
- 4 – Y-negatives, lowest in the rank.

Ember is born as an Y-negative. He had surgery done and every week is injecting himself with a cocktail of testosterone. These are expensive and there is hardly any money left for food. But all is worth it because Ember is working hard to become a male. He is convinced he should have been a masc and is also working out all the time at the gym to grow *THE* muscles.

Ember's life isn't going well. He's fighting everyday against his body and his struggle to make a future for himself. He has his own business but has trouble finding enough costumers to pay his injectives, rent money and food. And in this order...

Jess is a masc and offers Ember a job. They are going to the outside world of Atlanta to check the sensors that monitor how earth is recovering from the pollution. Everything is nonexistent and they have also these acid rains.

Jess is a different. He doesn't ridicule or harass Y-negatives and he becomes friends with Ember. Relationships between mascs and Y-negatives are not illegal but are found disgusting. Ember tries to ignore his growing feelings towards Jess. But everything changes as Jess seems to return his feelings.

During a heavy acid rainstorm they are attacked by scavengers that apparently live in the outskirts. The scavengers were out to steal their goods. (view spoiler) They are treated as prisoners and Jess will be used as ransom for his controlling father. Ultimately they are saved and separated from each other. And everything is back to *normal* again.

Ember goes back to his job but because he hasn't had his shots for a long time, his body has lost their muscles and he loses his beard. The time in the scavenger's camp has Ember thinking. Are these hormones he keeps injecting doing their job or is there something in them that's just addictive??

"I forgot what I was fighting for."

"And what's that?"

"Myself. My right to exist. Because if I don't fight for it, who will?"

I enjoyed this read. It was interesting but totally fucked up. In the end Jess and Ember choose for each other and you can already see things changing. People trying to accept their relationship and I would love to know if they'll succeed more!!

The only negative thing I would want to say is that there was no information how the world had become one gender minded. A pitty.

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### **Erica Chilson says**

#### **I received a copy of this title to read and review for Wicked Reads**

5 Stars

**In the last surviving cities of a ruined world, the concept of "woman" has been forgotten to history.**

Genre: Dystopian | MM Romance (but not) | Transgender (but not) | Government influence affecting societal actions and reactions (Brainwashing the sheep) | Violence | Dark & Twisted | Heat-level: low (story-driven) |

The first thought that came to my mind upon finishing Y Negative, "I hope there is a sequel- I'd read it in a heartbeat!"

I'm not entirely sure how to review this, to the point I refused to read other reviews prior to doing so, not wanting their undue influence. So this review is running on my turbulent emotions.

My first thoughts upon starting Y Negative, "OH! I know what the author has in store!" I wanted to seek Kelly Haworth out and give a high five, but not for the reasons you'd think.

(I'm sure the author wanted to highlight how idiotic bigotry is by showing it in reverse)

I belong to an MM group where most of the fans are anti-lady-bits, to the point they won't read a book which has any in it. Here is a dystopian world comprised of all MEN, in a world without women. Sounds like it's totally up their alley, doesn't it? *"Who mutilated you?"* I make no judgments- read whatever entertains you. But some go as far as to call their own sexuality **GROSS** in their quest to read books that are about tolerance and acceptance, not realizing they are being biased against what inherently makes them who they are. If there was ever a book to draw this to attention, Y Negative (as in XX) would be it.

Tolerance and acceptance should be across the board, toward yourself and others. To accept anyone who is different than yourself shouldn't mean you can't accept who you are. It isn't an either/or situation. Read whatever trips your trigger, but don't act like an entire gender or persuasion should be off-limits. Y Negative shows this perfectly.

I was rabid while reading Y Negative, annoyed when interrupted even for a minute. The concept was so intriguing, my mind was blown.

## MIND BLOWN

Now, the other reason I can't truly give a thorough review, because to dissect the book is to give important plot points away that would ruin it for readers. This is a book I'd suggest you read with a buddy, someone you could chat with during and after, to pick apart the meaning of things, whether it was what the author meant to create or not.

My thoughts, because I didn't get to do a buddy-read: aside from the warped bigotry, which makes a person think- control in general, but population control. If all you had was men, and men who wanted children had to request to have children, the population was controlled with children only given to those who the government deemed deserving. How do you do this? Remove the *concept* of women, and make it taboo for het coupling, which would result in a child if the government didn't sterilize the Y Neg. Ember wished to transition into someone he was not only because that was the only way he could be with who he genetically desired (If he was as masculine as possible, it wouldn't be a het coupling anymore, would it?). Among a billion other things rattling around in my head.

Y Negative is a thought-provoking read, and that is a very good thing indeed.

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One drawback: The world building was intriguing, but in a world with one gender (XY) divided by other types, it was never truly explained what those types represent. I can't go into detail, not wishing to spoil the reading experience, but I understood what meant what except for one type mentioned only a handful of times (whatever Kacy was supposed to be) I never could put a finger on what that 'gender' was.

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For those who are adamant against anything but males in their MM reads, unless you have an open mind, no matter how much I want you to read this book, I don't want you to read this and get angry with the author. Even if I'd get a kick out of you reading an MM with this narrator. But then again, since it's not driven by between-the-sheets action... Just don't say I didn't warn you that this is **NOT** traditional MM romance.

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## Christy says

**3.5 Stars** I am fascinated by post-apocalyptic stories and the world building that some authors can perform. The description for 'Y Negative' interested me immediately. I couldn't imagine a world where the gender equivalent of female had disappeared and been replaced with Y Negatives. These people account for one fifth of the population, having no Y chromosome bundles on either X chromosome. They are not referred to as females, girls, ladies, or women. Everything in this world has a male designation, although the Y Negatives are also referred to as andros.

The Y Negatives are all required to do their surrogacy duty, once they're of age, and the government pays them for it. Once that duty is fulfilled, these Y Negatives have their breasts removed, and begin taking testosterone injections. There are no het pairings, and the majority of andros fulfill their needs with one another. Except Ember has no interest in other andros, he's het and only wants mascs, and he's paid the price for it his entire life by being beaten up, mocked, and ridiculed. In fact, all andros are treated poorly by the mascs.

Jess is in college working to get his credentials, so he can further study the environment and try to help repair some of the damage done. Jess's Father owns the R&D company that designs and develops much of the new advances. Unfortunately Jess's father is intimidating, and Jess doesn't know how to tell him that he doesn't want to work in the company labs; that instead, he wants to spend his time at the stations doing the field work his dad did.

Jess hires Ember, as his computer tech specialist, to accompany his team for a month as they travel to various environmental stations to check on upgrades, perform maintenance, etc. The money offered is the only incentive that gets Ember to spend a month in close confines with four mascs. Unfortunately for Ember, he starts to develop an attraction to Jess. What he can't believe is when Jess appears to return it.

*"Yes . . . Why are you—" Doubt collapsed my throat.*

*"I'm trying to understand why everyone says this is wrong." His whispers eased occasionally into the deep resonance of his voice. The sound reverberated through me.*

*"Have you figured it out?" I asked, and he squeezed my hip. "No."*

The Outskirts is the land outside the cities, and where not only the stations are, but where the scavengers live. Scavengers consist of mascs and Y Negatives who've left the cities, tired of the bureaucracies, and for the negatives tired of being told what they can and can't do, and being forced to mutilate themselves with testosterone injections in the hope they'll be accepted. These men live out on the land, dealing with the scars they get from the acid rain, and the sunburns from the heat they can't escape. They raid and kill just to survive while scorning those who live in the cities. After an attack where Ember is injured, Jess races him to a scavenger settlement when he learns they have a doctor. Jess willingly undergoes their barbaric treatment of him, just to get Ember what he needs. But it will be up to the two of them to save their lives and get home.

I'm at a conflict regarding my feelings about this novel. I think the author did a really wonderful job at world building and creating a storyline I've never seen before. However, throughout the whole book I kept waiting for something...I'm not even sure what...but it felt as if the author was taking me somewhere exciting, and then I was just left, waiting. This is only my personal opinion. I liked the characters although I wished Jess had been stronger, but Ember is definitely worth a read. Overall, I enjoyed the post-apocalyptic and dystopian aspects, so if that's something you really enjoy, then this might be the right book for you.

NOTE: This book was provided by Riptide Publishing for the purpose of a review on Rainbow Book Reviews

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## Shay J says

**WOW.**

Wooooooooow.

This is by far one of the most bizarre book concepts I have ever read, the synopsis didn't even touch the surface of how twisted and unique this world was... I can't say whether that was a good or bad thing, it was just *bizarre*.

There are no women in this world, people have even forgotten what the word mother is. "Females" are non-existent, but actually not really. There is no easy way for me to explain but simply stating the facts, so heres a quick learners guide...

People are divided in to three main categories:

**Masc's** (*The most "manly" on the food chain of humans*)

**Andro's** (*Y Negatives that take steroids to enhance their masculine features, still looked down upon by society though.*)

**Y Negative** (*People born without the Y chromosome, therefore in this world less worthy, the scum, pretty much looked down upon by everyone...Including other Y Negative's*)

Y Negatives are forced to carry babies for other families, normally large quantities before they can become *Andro's*, they are paid to be surrogates and continue to reproduce as to maintain the human population. Families have a *Father* and a *Dad*. Like I said "Females" are no longer in existence, which in my mind confused me because Y Negatives are from what I read, Female. They have a vagina, (not called that in the book though) and they carry babies, and it was just very confusing... Not at all what I expected when I picked it up.

Overall even though I enjoyed learning about this new world and the relationships that developed, I didn't quite connect to the individual characters. Both narrators left me very on the ledge, not quite sure whether I liked them or not. I felt like their relationships should have dragged a little more. It would have held my attention better!

This was a truly unique experience which in all honestly is what I look for in a book, so I decided to rate it 3.5 stars!

*This title was generously provided by (RipTide Publishing) on NetGalley for a honest review!*

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## Cynthia (Bingeing On Books) says

I received this ARC from NetGalley in exchange for my honest review.

One of the things I loved about this book was that it really turned sexuality on its head. There are no women, at least none in the traditional sense. The people once called women are now called Y-Negatives. So for those born Y-Negative, they generally had women's genitals. Or at least, they mutilated themselves so they would have them. Or something. I didn't really get that part. A Y-Negative is forced to be a surrogate for the majority of their lives. Generally, guys hired surrogates, but they never saw them or interacted with them. The surrogate is forced to have the baby, then the baby goes to the new parents and the surrogate never sees the baby at all. They are called Andros and then guys born with the Y chromosome are called mascs. If an andro is attracted to mascs, then they are called "het." (Get it? Heterosexual?). And this is really, really frowned upon, kind of like some people frowning on homosexuality. Ember is one such andro. He doesn't tell many people about his attraction to mascs because people frown on it. Mascs treat Andros like they aren't people. Andros are basically a lower class of people. There were so many interesting concepts the author introduced regarding gender and sexuality that my head was spinning. It was interesting that behavior that would be classified as heterosexual is what is frowned upon in this society. The problem was that there was so much confusion and the author introduced many terms, but didn't really explain them. For instance, there was yet another class of people (higher than an andro, apparently) who were exins. But I have no clue how an exin was different from an andro or a masc.

When Ember meets Jess (a masc), there is an instant attraction. Personally, I didn't feel the chemistry. Jess was attracted pretty quickly and then there were declarations of love after a few weeks of knowing each other. Okay, so another part that confused me was the location of where everyone lived. I mean, I get they lived in Atlanta. But when Jess and Ember went somewhere for work (Kansas City, I think), there was still tons of acid rain and they had to be careful about being covered when outside. Then there were scavengers, who were people . . . who did something, somewhere and no one like them. Yeah, I didn't get it either. I didn't get why Atlanta was fine and everywhere else was dangerous. I didn't understand why the scavengers were or what they were looking for or why there was a need for them to sign some kind of peace treaty. Then there was an allusion to a secret Jess's father (a big researcher) was keeping and some kind of fraud or something. Seriously, so much missing information. I was totally and completely lost.

As far as the relationship between Jess and Ember, I don't feel much time was put into it and I don't feel like much changed. Ember was actually as disgusted with the Y-Negative body as anyone else. He took testosterone on a regular basis and was obsessed with working out so he could look like as much of a masc as possible. He was as prejudiced as anyone. But he never changed. He still had the same feelings at the end of the book. The ending was just sort of boring because nothing changed. Nobody's feelings changed and it just fell flat.

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### **Ije the Devourer of Books says**

Five fabulous stars!!!!!!

My gosh I truly enjoyed this story! It has a dystopian/sci fi feel to it and drew me in, holding my attention from the first word. It was just such a great read!!

I was rather curious when I saw this on NetGalley but requested it because it sounded interesting. I do like sci-fi as long as it doesn't have too much futuristic technology and this book was pitched at the right level.

Both fans and non-fans of dystopian or sci fi fiction will enjoy this story about a world where gay relationships are the norm and straight relationships are scorned by society. This future version of our world where to be a man is to be a masc and anything else is substandard and a stigmatised Y negative or andro.

There are so many mm books to choose from but this one definitely has a distinctive edge.

In a society of men one would think that there would be equality but there isn't. Time and pollution has changed the human race and now there are only men but even within this gender differences keep people apart.

Ember is Y negative, although he is a man he takes injections to keep his muscular form because he is physically different to the mascs this sets him apart and leaves him open to abuse and violence. Despite living in a world where he is considered to be less than a man, he has his own business and persists in keeping focused on his physical abilities and his sense of self but his hearts desire is to be a masc. Worse than that he is attracted to mascs (men who are fully masculine with a male physical shape and the chromosomes to match). Ember knows that this is something he may desire but will never see, but things change when he gets a job working with Jesse.

Jesse is a masc but he is not someone who takes delight in humiliating others. He is focused on his father's research firm and keen to see the development of new technology that will help heal the barren land surrounding their towns. He recruits Ember as a tech specialist. Working with Ember challenges Jesse and helps him to understand what non-mascs experience and slowly as he and Ember face the challenges of the wasteland Jesse begins to draw closer to Ember seeing more than just the physical.

But there are challenges for both Jesse and Ember:

a highly damaged and poisonous environment,

a discriminating and judgemental society,

a race of wild people who live in the outskirts beyond the reach of the law,

a family that has expectations,

And the need to find scientific break throughs to help heal the earth.

I don't think I have the words to explain how brilliant this story is. It took me a bit of time to get to grips with the world building and the societal structure but the character of Ember portrayed this in a way that caught my imagination and also enabled me to empathise with him. Ember's challenges and frustrations are felt and experienced through his relationships with his family, his few friends, his desperate desire to be a masc and the challenges of running a business in a world that see him as less than perfect. But Ember is also courageous and visionary and not afraid to try and shape his life and a future for himself. In this story we participate in his struggles but also in his self discovery and when he finds himself working with a group of masc strangers his character comes alive and the story just flows.

And together with Jesse, Ember encounters the challenges of the outskirts, the challenges of the city and the challenge of staying alive.

I like stories that are different and worlds which are new and creative and the author has managed to do this

in a really brilliant way. The story is gripping, the characters are all very different and engaging, and there is a sense of tension that threads it's way through the story, alerting us to the fact that anything can happen and that this is not a road that we have travelled before, or even a book that we have read before. And the story maintains this pace and this tension right to the very end.

My only gripe is the cover. The cover makes the story look as if the book is "like any other mm story" and it isn't. There are so many fantastic scenes in this book which would have captured something of the story far better than the cover of the single bloke in an anorak!

But moving on

This is a great story, both creative and unique, and well worth adding to the ever growing to read pile that we all have, but it is to be read sooner rather than later.

I hope to read more from this author in the future.

Copy provided by Riptide Publishing via NetGalley - Nice one!! Many thanks!

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## **Reflection says**

“So I was just born bad and you’re bad by choice?”

In this case, being born bad, is having the misfortune to be Y Negative. You may expect a life of prejudice and antagonism. Y Negatives strive to be accepted as male using both weekly testosterone injections and surgery, but their 'andro' status is viewed with scepticism and hostility, and therefore they mostly keep to themselves.

In this skewed world Ember lives as an andro and struggles to pay his rent, buy his weekly injection and pay for groceries. Despite being talented and knowledgeable about repairing and upgrading technology, work is not always easy to come by. Ember finally gets a well paid month long gig traveling into the wilderness with a team of corporate researchers, to keep their technology repaired from the sustained acid rain.

Hired by Jess, a privileged male - a 'masc' - and the son and heir to the owner of the company. The rest of the team is shocked to be spending a month in the wilderness with an andro. Andros and mascs are rarely in each others company and the atmosphere is strained.

Spending time together, Jess and Ember feel an growing attraction between them, much to their teammates shock.

The world building is believable and interesting; however it would be fair to say I struggled to fully understand the concept of the prejudice against Y Negatives. Brighter people than me could probably get their heads around this much more quickly. Essentially, being 'het' is dimly viewed, therefore Ember looking for a relationship with a masc rather than another andro is an almost hopeless prospect (especially given the scorn and contempt he endures already).

I found the story intriguing despite my head melting as I tried to comprehend the sexuality and mores of this future world...Surely, if you are born female or Y Negative and undergo surgery, take additional testosterone and refer to yourself as he, does that not suggest you identify as male? In which case surely being attracted to a guy is not het?...I am confused. My mind does all kind of mental gymnastics. I wish that all this made more sense to me, but I think it is my ignorance rather than the book at fault.

I enjoyed my own mental gymnastics and struggles to understand, the story was a thought provoking glimpse into a dystopian future.

We journey from life in the city, to the wilderness and return to the city. Following Ember's traumatic experiences in the wild, he re-evaluates his life and priorities based on new understandings.

I struggled with Ember, I never particularly warmed to him. I suppose his strength and endurance are admirable, but as a person I could take or leave him and on the whole I would probably leave him - clearly not an ideal response to a main character. He's a bit whiny in truth, which I sincerely hope is his personality, and not a comment on his Y Negative origins; on the other hand if I lived in his world I might grumble too. I found it difficult to imagine why he would be attractive to Jess.

Y Negative is an interesting and unusual novel, full of unexpected twists and a scarily dystopian theme of prejudice. Dive in and enjoy it will certainly give you pause for thought,

*\* I received a copy from the publisher in exchange for an honest review \**

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### **Jordan Lombard says**

Wow. Just wow. I was/am just completely blown away by this novel. I'm not sure what to do with myself after finishing it and I wish I hadn't finished it yet, or that maybe there was a sequel. Amazing book.

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### **Paul says**

For a first novel Y Negative is an excellent achievement. Kelly Haworth has written one kick ass fantasy, which is also dystopian in nature and rather dark but not over the top nasty as some dystopian novels can be.

The basis of the story is obviously about genetic's and I'm sure a few people might relate it to other books but because I read a lot in this genre I found it had an original and refreshing storyline.

Without giving too much away you do not want to be male in this repressed world that is missing his Y chromosome. What they're subjected to is horrendous but with great writing and interesting MC's it makes for a sad but captivating thriller. I also think that Kelly Haworth could write a kick ass sequel to this book. It doesn't end as a cliffhanger but it ends with a multitude of excellent possibilities.

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### **Jewel says**

*Y Negative was generously provided to me by the publisher, via Netgalley, in exchange for an honest review*

Wow. So, that was one of the most usual stories I've read in a while. I wasn't, at all, sure what to expect when I requested this book from Netgalley, but the blurb sounded really interesting. And so was the book.

*Y Negative* takes place in a future where women no longer exist - but that isn't really true. They're still there, it's just that the male pronouns are used to refer to **everyone**. And Y negative individuals - ie women - are only used as surrogates for the mascs, or the genetic men. After they perform their duty several times they have their breasts surgically removed and start taking testosterone to more fit in with the womenless society. At this point, they are referred to as andros.

Except, that doesn't work, either - shocking, I know. Andros are treated lower than second class and no matter what they do, they are never accepted into society. And don't even think about mixing with the mascs, oh, no. Families are made up of a Father and a Dad and whatever children they commission from surrogates. This is such a fucked up system and really reminded me of *A Handmaid's Tale*. And andros pretty much only mix with each other and sames with the mascs. It was just...odd.

Ember is a genetic Y negative. But the difference between him and most other andros around, is that he really feels like he should be a masc. In his brain, he is a masc. But his body just isn't right. He does everything he can to look masc - he exercises as much as he can, he takes protein supplements, he does what he has to to bulk up, but it isn't enough. He even takes as many black market testosterone injections as he can manage, but still, he doesn't fit in. Society is still a problem and he still gets beat down at every turn. Ember only wants to find himself a masc who will love him for who he is. But that's just a pipe dream. So he's lonely and because business is slow and he refuses to miss a dose of his testosterone, he's also often hungry.

Jess is the oldest son of a very wealthy man. Jess is a masc, but while his Father is a ruthless businessman, his Dad was more compassionate. Jess takes after his Dad, though, and never quite grasped why andros should be treated with such disdain. As the book progressed, we get to know Jess a little bit, but not as much as I would have liked. While I felt like I kind of knew Ember, by the end, I still didn't really feel all that close to Jess, except to feel he was a nice guy.

Where *Y Negative* kind of lost me is that we never find out how it is that society devolved to the point where there is only one gender pronoun. The ruined environment, I can only assume we did ourselves with the endless greed and war that we see all around us. But the no women thing? I never got why.

Also, the last 20% of the book was mostly just depressing. Ember's and Jess's separation lasted way too long and once they finally got back together, we don't at all see the struggles that they will undoubtedly go through as a couple. The story just kind of ends.

What I'm left with is me just trying to process. It wasn't a bad story, it was very unique and I thought the first 80% or so was pretty good. Around a 3.5, I think. But that last 20%, just kind of lost me. It was entirely about Embers suffering, and at no time do we see how Jess is doing. So, with that, I'd call this a 3 star \*mixed feelings\* read.

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**JustJen "Miss Conduct" says**

#### **4.5 star** review by The Blogger Girls.

This story was unlike any I've read before. There is a lot of worldbuilding in this dystopian futuristic society where the world has all but been destroyed. Most of society lives in the city where everything is carefully controlled, from the air to the food and even the people to a degree.

Outside the city is a vast wasteland that is monitored and tested for signs of recovery. It is out here where most of the story takes place.

Then there are the people and where the story really hits new territory. There are basically no women. Men are considered mascs. Jess is a masc. Ember is a Y negative, or a female who is basically a trans. Ember is addicted to taking the hormones that at least make him appear more masc, using every available fund to pay for the shots. There is a lot of bullying about the Y negatives, as they are looked down upon in a big way. Gay relationships are the norm here, and since Y negatives are not considered actual men, they take a lot of heat for it. It was tricky to follow, but worth hanging in for.

Jess does research at his father's firm. He offers Ember a job as the IT specialist for an expedition to the wasteland. Jess is not a normal masc in that he doesn't believe in bashing/shaming the Y negatives, and, in fact, is actually curious about what it is like to be one. The two become friends and then lovers as their relationship grows. This was a very emotional based relationship, as opposed to sexual, though there was that as well. They face many problems, both in the wasteland, as well as back in the city once they return.

While this story was very different and a bit confusing at times, it was so interesting that I kept turning pages to try and understand, figure out and see where things would go next. There is a lot going on plot-wise which really kept things exciting. I loved that it kept my interest in so many different ways. It was extremely unique and unlike any mm story out there. If you are able to open your mind to the possibilities in this story, you will see a lot of color in an otherwise very gray world. I'll definitely be looking for more from Ms. Haworth in the future.

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