



Poltergeeks

Sean Cummings

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15-year-old Julie Richardson is about to learn that being the daughter of a witch isn't all it's cracked up to be. When she and her best friend, Marcus, witness an elderly lady jettisoned out the front door of her home, it's pretty obvious to Julie there's a supernatural connection.

In fact, there's a whisper of menace behind increasing levels of poltergeist activity all over town. After a large-scale paranormal assault on Julie's high school, her mother falls victim to the spell Endless Night. Now it's a race against time to find out who is responsible or Julie won't just lose her mother's soul, she'll lose her mother's life.

Poltergeeks Details

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From Reader Review Poltergeeks for online ebook

Ryan Lawler says

The YA binge continues with Poltergeeks by Sean Cummings, my third book from the guys at Strange Chemistry. This is another very solid entry that does a lot of things right and sets up things very effectively for future novels in the series.

Poltergeeks tells the story of Julie Richardson, a strong willed teenage witch who has a habit of picking fights well beyond her capabilities. When a rogue poltergeist put's Julie's mother in a coma and continues targeting Julie and her best friend Marcus, it's up to Julie to track the source of the poltergeist to stop the attacks and save her mom.

As with most YA books I've been reading recently, the story here is pretty straight forward - young girl with special powers runs into trouble, the one person who can get her out of trouble is removed from the equation, and she has to grow up fast if she is going to save the people she loves. Oh and also throw in an awkward teenage love triangle, some secret family drama and a predictable ending. That said, Poltergeeks rarely strays into stereotypical territory, and Cummings keeps from indulging in some of the popular YA tropes like the inept authority figure. Things are always kept fun, light hearted, and there are plenty of geek culture easter eggs to watch out for on the way through.

The characters have been well crafted here, and they aren't over the top geeks like I have seen recently in a lot of YA stories. Being a geek is just one element of their overall character, and they all have plenty of little nuances and ticks that get revealed over the course of the story. I really liked Julie, she plays the role of a strong female protagonist with a lot poise, modesty, and some random ingenuity. She is impulsive, she gets the crap beaten out of her by ghosts, she beats the crap out of other ghosts, and she is smiling the whole time while her brain is working overtime trying to figure out and exploit a weakness. Cummings doesn't make a big deal out of her being a strong teenage girl, he just lets her be who she is and lets the plot mould around her. Marcus provides a great foil for Julie, he is calm, measured, not quite strong enough to fight his own battles but more than assured in his knowledge of how the world should work. These two feed off each other and make for a very proficient team.

Poltergeeks is a fun coming of age story, one that feels like a cross between Sabrina The Teenage Witch, Charmed, and Ghostbusters. It is one of the more fun stories I have read this year, something that I have needed given all the serious fantasy stories I seem to have been reading of late. This is a book that should have no trouble making you smile at least once.

Nikki says

Poltergeeks is really fun. It's definitely very adolescent in tone, but it doesn't take itself too seriously. In fact, sometimes it's almost too flippant, which would be my main criticism -- but it made up for that for me by having a solid, meaningful relationship between the mother and daughter at the centre of the story. Not a perfect one, I hasten to add, but a strong one, and one where neither of them is portrayed as evil in any way for butting heads. Julie doesn't go off on her being all Wondergirl; she has her mother, and she has... well, the rest is spoilers.

The story has a romantic relationship too, but that isn't overpowering and fits neatly in with the plot. I like that there's relatively little drama between the male and female leads, and that they're so solidly best friends.

Overall, solid and enjoyable.

Tyrannosaurus regina says

I wish I was the sensible sort of person who could easily give up on a book, because I knew from very early on that this one wasn't really working for me, but once I start something I have this compulsion to finish it. And I wanted to like this one, because it sounded interesting and I love finding things unapologetically set in Canada. (But then, when *don't* I want to like a book that I pick up to read?)

Fundamentally, the problem for me was with voice, which struck me as uneven throughout. It often read like some of the asides and turns of phrase in the narrative were thrown in as an afterthought. (Julie's *actions*, however, were very apt for a teenager--frustrating and annoying, but authentic.) There were other problems with the writing too, though--there are a lot of cliché descriptions on top of a *lot* of infodump up front in the book, among other (predominantly style) issues.

While I appreciated the realistic mother-daughter relationship (and wish we'd seen more of it), it could've done without the bit that assumed all female friendships inevitably ended in catfights. Classy.

Maybe I'm being too hard on it, because there were bits and pieces that I liked (such as the tension between Julie and Marla in Julie's mom's hospital room) and I think there's a good premise here, but it just didn't come together in the execution.

Christopher Nelson says

POLTERGEEKS: May the Force bewitch you!

The stunning cover art of POLTERGEEKS is a promise delivered. From the intense opening scene until the spectacular climax, author Sean Cummings conjures a Teen Paranormal novel that crosses the boundaries of the heretofore stereotypical teenage girl-biased genre and ushers in a whole new perspective, one to which many of us can easily relate.

POLTERGEEKS is about teenage witch Julie Richardson and her struggle to prove herself to her mother, a powerful witch that lives apart from the local coven. When sudden poltergeist activity reaches new and terrifying levels of violence, Julie's mother is compromised and a tragic twist of irony places Julie in such a position where she must prove herself if she is to save her mother's life. Her journey becomes one of self-discovery and growth as Julie must navigate through two worlds, one of high school drama and typical teen challenges, the other a breakneck pace through the spirit world of evil shades and spell-blasting immortals.

Sean Cummings captures the voice of his teenage protagonist from a surprisingly risky style, but one that pays dividends throughout. Unlike the typical, first-person POV and present tense combination found in so many titles under the Teen Paranormal heading of late, POTERGEEKS is written in a third-person past tense, making it a bit more appealing to the young male audience, as well as female. Also, the use of

language is spot on with a great Star Wars motif woven throughout and a very believable teen dialect found in both conversation as well as narrative. Of course, it wouldn't be a good teen novel without a solid romance arc and Sean Cummings crafts a beautiful one that—while not exactly unexpected—teases and then delivers to satisfaction.

Overall, the only drawbacks I found in **POLTERGEEKS** were a few very minor grammatical/ typeset errors in the e-book version, though I suspect that is idiosyncratic to digits and not found in the actual print edition.

Highly recommended, **POLTERGEEKS** is an action adventure amalgam at every chapter. Righteous imagery, military precise detail, and all the wonder of the unknown wrapped into one delightful tale where the teenage witch is more than just a spell-casting chick in red hair and sparkles—she's a kick ass heroine with the moves of a ninja and the power of a Jedi, all fueled by a heart that beats fierce for the ones she loves.

Lolly's Library says

e-ARC graciously provided by the folks at NetGalley

There are many things to love about this book and only a couple which will cause the eyes to roll dramatically and several “Oh, please”s to be shouted. The writing is decent, moving along at a steady clip and keeping the reader involved. The action, while not exactly heart-pounding, is still fairly vivid, the dialogue is zingy, and some of the situations are downright laugh-until-your-sides-hurt funny (starting with the first scenes in which a cat flies through a chimney; trust me, it's a lot less horrific and a lot more hilarious than what it seems). Overall, **Poltergeeks** is a fun, quick, engaging read, with a great deal of humor and very little angst, which is welcome in an angst-ridden genre.

The protagonist, Julie, is a completely believable teen. She has moments of attempted maturity, of resignation to her duty, not to mention a willingness to sacrifice herself to save those she loves. Then she slips into behaving like your typical teenage girl: She pouts, she gets distracted and does stupid things, often at the most inconvenient time possible, she doesn't know how she feels about her friend, Marcus, who's just blindsided her with his declaration that he thinks she's beautiful, but flies off the handle when her other best friend, Marla, expresses interest in Marcus, and she worries about being normal and accepted at school (though she eventually comes to a “screw that” realization about being normal and accepts her particular peculiarity). She's a well-rounded creation, with a lot more personality and spunk than many of today's YA heroines. The book is narrated in a 1st person P.O.V., so we get to experience the story through Julie's eyes; she's snarky as hell, so it's quite entertaining to hear her inner (and outer) monologues. (My favorite expression of hers is “Conspiracies suck monkey butt.” Call me juvenile, but that just tickled my funny bone.) The other characters, though not as well-developed, are still human enough to support their presence. Marcus is presented as a weedy, rather unassuming science geek, who happens to be the school's biggest target for bullies; he's not macho, he's not dark and brooding, and (Yes! Yes!) he's not stalker-creepy. In fact, he's rather unapologetic about his brains and ability to use them, which, dear god, is absolutely wonderful in a male lead. Marla is the local Goth girl, complete with black eye makeup, white skin, piercings and variously textured (leather, latex, fishnet) black clothing. We're given a hint as to a deeper back story; she was once just as picked on as Marcus, but mysteriously managed to make herself an unappealing target sometime in the past. However, that's about as far as we get when it comes to knowing Marla, possibly to

give further drama to later story developments.

Speaking of these three characters, you would imagine they would engender some sort of love triangle. Nope. Yippee! No angst-ridden love triangle in a YA novel! Just a sweet and simple romance which builds up between Julie and Marcus, more on Julie's side as she comes to terms with her emotions—Marcus already knows how he feels about Julie. The only sickly part is her insistence on referencing his actions as “pure” and “virtuous,” which gets old fast. (Oh, and I've got to mention a guardian character introduced in the story when Julie's mother goes into hospital. This guardian is an immortal spirit who has to take over a body in order to manifest on this plane. Eventually, the spirit takes over the body of a Great Dane. Yup, there's a talking dog. Gotta love that.)

However, the character of the mother is where the author makes his first mistake and is the source of many of the eye rolling and “Oh please” moments mentioned above.

(Julie receives a phone call from her mother, who's just woken up from a magically-induced coma in which she was near death.)

Julie - "Mom, it's you! I'm so glad you're alive! While you were in the hospital, I managed to discover my destiny, trap and destroy the evil spirit which has been making our lives miserable, and save you from kidney failure by waking you from your coma!"

Mother - "You're grounded, young lady! You didn't listen to me in the first place, even though this was all a set-up by an outside influence and the actions that have taken place were inevitable, but you're still in big trouble for reacting to them and doing your best to take care of yourself, your friends, and me. Which means you're grounded for the foreseeable future, until you learn to behave yourself and remember to ask me before you do anything, even if it's only to go to the bathroom."

Sorry, nope, uh uh. We don't see a lot of her mother in the novel except at the beginning and the end, but when we do see her, she's inevitably chastising Julie for something or being judgmental or being one of those mothers who is feared will “lose it” when she hears about some inoffensive action. Basically behaving in a way which only makes a child take bigger risks and act out more, not to mention resentful. Julie speaks of how she's able to talk to her mother, how she's able to confide in her mother, but I never see any evidence of that in the interplay between the two. It's her mother yelling/lecturing and Julie complying (after putting up an inevitably futile argument). So much for equal discourse. The author gives thanks to his editor for convincing him that “teenage daughters fight with their mothers. A lot.” Well, I'm very sorry to tell you Sean Cummings, but your editor gave you some bad advice. Yes, some teenage daughters fight with their mothers. However, there are a majority of teenage girls that not only not fight with their mothers, they get along very well with them. They respect each other, they're close and loving. The daughters confide in their mothers and respect their advice and wisdom; the mothers listen to their daughters and respect their individuality and choices. I know this because I had such a relationship with my mother. I never was grounded; I never lost my phone or other privileges. My mother and I talked about everything and as a result, I never worried about being “misunderstood.” And I'm not the only girl to have had such a relationship. A good mother-daughter relationship is not unusual; what would've been unusual is if Cummings had actually been brave enough to portray a good mother-daughter relationship instead of the traditional adversarial one. It's obvious the way Cummings writes in his afterword about his editor and the advice she gave to him that he probably had initially written a more harmonious relationship between Julie and her mother and that he changed the characters around simply to follow his editor's instruction. All you have to do is look at the easy way Julie interacts with any of the other characters in the novel and contrast that to how jarring it is when Julie and her

mother interact. It doesn't mesh with the rest of the relationships Cummings has created.

Other than the misstep with the mother, there was very little else about the book over which I can complain. Regarding the ultimate confrontation at the end, a malevolent 400-year-old spirit who is trying to destroy Julie waits for the final confrontation so that Julie not only has time to prepare but to also pick an appropriate venue. What? That did not make sense at all and rather robbed the story of immediacy as well as some of the action. I could've more easily seen the characters hunkered down somewhere, trying to create a mish-mash of weapons as the enemy came closer and closer, until finally there's an attack and final battle. Speaking of the story, the plot points driving the action, making the characters go from point A to point B to point Z, feels slightly contrived and hollow. When even your own character points out the problem, as Julie did at the end of the book, you've got a big problem.

However, the biggest issue, one which made the book almost unreadable, was the formatting. Whoever was responsible for formatting the novel for the e-book version should be fired, in a public and humiliating way. Sentences and paragraphs were jumbled and pushed together, making it difficult for the story to flow in a natural, not to mention readable, fashion. It was absolutely and teeth-grindingly frustrating.

Overall, if you're looking for an fun, fast, funny, and original read, try **Poltergeeks**. Just, maybe go for the print edition instead.

See more of my reviews at: <http://lollyslibrary.blogspot.com/>

Melanie says

Poltergeeks opens up with all hell breaking loose : a woman is thrown out of her house while her furniture and objects are found floating around. From Julie and Marcus' expertise, this can only be the result of a very mischievous poltergeist who was yanked from the other side by someone very powerful. Supernatural activity is going off the charts everywhere, even in school. No one is safe, not even Julie's mother who falls under the spell of Endless Night, a powerful spell that leaves her in a coma. Messages are being sent to Julie via YouTube videos, an immortal named Holly will give her answers but she'll demand something in return, and the spirit of a loved one will offer help and will reveal Julie's destiny. It's now up to Julie, Marcus and Betty, Julie's guardian, to find out who's behind all of this mayhem and put an end to it while fighting to save her mom's life.

Julie may be a witch but she really is your normal teenager. Proof? Well how about her mother grounds her even if, in Julie's eyes, she's just trying to help. She often takes matters in her own hands and doesn't think about the consequences. For example, she doesn't listen to her mom when the school is in total chaos and tries to take care of it herself. Result : her mom is now laying in a hospital bed. Her best friend, Marcus, is the one making sure she follows the rules.

Marcus and Julie have been friends for so long that she doesn't know how to react when he admits his feelings towards her. Julie needs to get her feelings straight before goth girl Marla steals him from her. Marcus is the science geek. He sometimes wants to gather scientific information on the supernatural and he's also dumbfounded in front of anything abnormal. He's one of the few who knows about Julie and her mother's witchcraft and it doesn't seem to bother him. He's always there to lend a helping hand. He also has a

very vulnerable side. At school he often gets teased and thrown in the garbage. He really needs to stand up for himself and not let Julie always do it for him.

When her mother is in the hospital Betty comes in the picture as Julie's guardian and offers a hand but only if Julie asks the right questions. She isn't human; she takes the body of a dying person or animal as her host until she grows tired of it. My favorite is when she occupies the body of a Great Dane. Even in the body of an animal she can be very useful!

Poltergeeks is Sean Cummings' first YA and also the first book in a new series that's off to an incredible start. Even if the story deals with Julie's mom fighting for her life, it's really a light and fun read. No tissues will be needed! I absolutely loved the chemistry between Julie and Marcus. They make an excellent team! The romance is a nice touch added to the plot but it's not the main focus. The magic is fantastic. He did an amazing job describing the supernatural. Everything is carefully thought-out and well-explained. I loved the mix of poltergeists and magic. I was really engrossed in the book from the very beginning. The action starts on page one and ends on the last page with hints of more action coming in the next book. I honestly can't wait to find out more. I think there might be a few family secrets that Julie has yet to unveil. I'm eagerly anticipating the sequel!

Poltergeeks is a great entertaining read that will please the fans of YA paranormal and urban fantasy.

e-book courtesy of the author in exchange for an honest review

Mieneke says

From the first synopsis I read when Strange Chemistry announced they had signed Sean Cummings, this book sounded like it would be a super fun read. And though it wasn't a perfect book, it made good in its promise with a very fun tale of hauntings, magic and romance. Reminiscent in tone of Buffy, it's a book that has fun with the tropes of the genre and doesn't take itself too seriously, despite tackling some difficult emotional topics, such as the impending loss of a parent and the first steps on the romantic front.

A lot of this book depends on the chemistry and dynamics between Julie and her best friend, Marcus. Fortunately, this worked really well and felt convincing, especially later on in the book when there is a clear 'will she, won't she' going on. Their friendship is one of the mainstays of Julie's life and when all hell breaks loose, Marcus is the one thing that keeps Julie focused and sane. I loved the interaction between them; they often had me chuckling out loud with their snarky banter, but at the same time Marcus' unwavering support and that letter also made me a bit mushy on the inside.

Of course, there is far more to Julie than just her relationship with Marcus. She's a strong female lead: funny, capable, head strong and independent. Julie is burning to prove to her mum how competent she, that she doesn't need to be treated like a child anymore. It's the classic adolescent's revolt. Unfortunately, when her mum gets hurt and might not make it, Julie thinks it is all her fault and she reacts accordingly. Julie has some growing up yet to do and while Cummings took her a ways to maturity, I think she's far from mature yet, which leaves some interesting things to discover in the next book. Similarly, Marcus has to do some growing

of his own, though in his case, it's more that he needs to learn how to stand up for himself. While he doesn't really come across as unsure of himself, he actually seems pretty comfortable with who he is, he does let the bullies walk all over him – read stuff him in a trash can – at school, seemingly unable to get them to stop, whereas by the end of the book he faces them down and gets the upper hand. While I really liked Marcus, I thought he was awesome and a lot like someone I would have hung out with at school, I do think he doesn't come across as a bullied kid. The only department in which he seems rather insecure is in the romance section and well, I think 98% of young teens are, so that really isn't surprising. Then again, apart from the few scenes with the bullies, we only see Marcus around either people he's comfortable with or in an action-filled situation, so there isn't really a lot of time or need to show him behaving like a bullied kid.

I loved the supernatural community Cummings created. We only catch the barest glimpse of the whole, since Julie and her mum aren't part of a coven, but it's clear that Cummings knows how this community is shaped and who you could meet if you'd ever find yourself amongst them. I thought Holly Penske, the crooked information broker was genius and Betty the Great Dane was AWESOME! I totally loved Betty and from the first time she walked on page until quite late in the game I wasn't sure whether she was a good guy or a bad guy, which gave her an extra edge.

If there was one complaint I had with *Poltergeeks*, other than the previously mentioned thing about Marcus, it was that some things were a little predictable. I'd figured out the identity of the person possessed by Thomas Hopkins a long while before the end, though I hadn't expected the twist that followed after Julie figured it out. What I can't figure out is whether Cummings telegraphed the culprit's identity that clearly or whether I just watch and read too many crime shows and books and he's relied too much on the common tropes of the genre, which made it easy for me to solve the riddle. I suspect it's the latter as the former would be sloppy writing, unless he did it on purpose as a misdirect for the twist that comes after. In which case, well-played sir, well-played.

Regardless, *Poltergeeks* is a fun read. It might not be a classic of the genre, but it is the kind of book that will show a teen that reading can be fun and those kinds of books are just as, if not more, important than the classics. *Poltergeeks* could be a gateway drug for a reluctant reader who enjoys the snarkier adolescent-oriented TV shows. In any case, this non-reluctant not-so-adolescent reader had a great time with Julie and Marcus' adventure and I'm looking forward to the second book in the series.

This book was provided for review by the publisher.

Rebecca McKinnon says

This is my first experience reading a book by Mr. Cummings, and I'm beyond thrilled by it.

A fantastic opening, I have to say. It drew me right in. (After all, a poltergeist kicking a person out of their home doesn't happen every day!) I absolutely had to find out what happened next. What happened was that I held onto the book a little tighter and refused to put it down. This book has a place on my small list of single-sitting reads.

I'm in love with the characters. Julie is phenomenal, and you seriously care what happens to her. And Marcus? Well, let me just say that it's clear from the start that he's interested in Julie, and that he'll be there for her even if she has no clue (or doesn't feel the same). Julie's mother, while a key element of the book, is a background character for much of the story, but that didn't stop Cummings from making her a great

character.

The conflict could have been made melodramatic, but it was handled so well that I never got that "overdone" feeling.

An absolute MUST read! Mr. Cummings, once on your reader radar, should never be removed. I can't wait for the next installment.

Anna says

That the main driving force behind most of Julie's choices is her relationship with her mother is a breath of fresh air in YA. There is a bit of romance, but her world doesn't revolve around it, and in fact she pushes things aside to deal with when she has more pressing matters sorted out. She's a rare teen girl protagonist, someone pro-active who makes her own decisions and faces the consequences, who spends more time kicking evil's butt than mooning after boys but isn't too damaged by a traumatic past to make human connections. She's loyal to her friends and fights with her mom and is basically a much more teenage girl than most of the young ladies you'll meet in the other books on the shelves.

For the most part, whether you'll enjoy *Poltergeeks* depends on how much you enjoy this sort of story. While the heroine stands out, and the worldbuilding has potential (I look forward to seeing it explored more in future volumes), the plot itself covers most of the standards and there aren't really any surprises here. The plot twists will likely feel like familiar ground to anyone who's been reading any contemporary fantasy in the past several years, and while mother as motivation instead of love interest is a change, and some of the secondary characters are a lot of fun, if you're not already keen on the lighter side of YA urban fantasy, you're not going to find anything here to change your mind. This isn't the book that'll stay with you twenty years from now, but it just might be the right one to hand to the young teen girl in your life. Certainly she'll find more here to relate to than nearly anything else out there will give her.

sj says

I wanted to love this book, but instead I only liked it.

I was disappointed with the uneven tone and the too-numerous-to-count typos.

Parts read like really young MG, but the swearing seemed thrown in to try to elevate the age demographic a little (and in the acknowledgements, the author admits his editor convinced him to add the language, so that makes sense). Other parts were very dark and not suitable for the age range the initial tone would have had you believe.

I feel like contains the seeds of greatness, but it wasn't nurtured enough and instead was just allowed to be mediocre instead.

But really, the typos were super distracting.

Anzu The Great Destroyer says

I made the mistake of pausing *Poltergeeks* and starting another book. Now I can't make myself get back to read it. I'm not in the mood. I'm not motivated enough. It's just that stupid. Whatever.

Poltergeeks is not my kind of book. The story is cheesy and clichéd. The heroine, Julie, is a brat that sounds like a thirty-year-old woman. She is special, and, most importantly, she is a moron. Julie has a BFF, Marcus, who secretly has a crush on her. Her girlfriend hits on her BFF because she's that evil. Her girlfriend might just be the villain in the book. I have no wish to find out if this is true or not.

The bottom line, *Poltergeeks* is horrible and the title is overly misleading. If you're looking for a fun and witty read, then avoid this one. It will only manage to dry up your brain cells.

ARC courtesy of Angry Robot via NetGalley

Mav says

I was going to write a snarky comment about the lack of a love triangle - or any HINT of a romantic subplot for that matter - in the book description, but I'm too busy squealing over the fact that the book description makes it clear the mother-daughter relationship is going to be an IMPORTANT part of the female protagonist's character development. That, and the cover features a girl in a DYNAMIC, powerful pose. ~~That, and I have hair envy.~~

The FountainPenDiva, Old school geek chick and lover of teddy bears says

Girl actually looking like she's saving the world instead of posing like she's on the cover of Teen Vogue? Check!

No pesky TWU WUV or WUV TRIANGLE? Check!

Actual Mother/Daughter relationship that isn't dysfunctional? Check!

Must spend money that should be used for groceries? Check!

Sarah says

I'm having a bit of a writing block today, so here, in list form, are some of my thoughts. (I like lists.)

Here are some things I liked:

* A teenage main character who acts and sounds her age. Julie is 15 and she's written like it! Her dialogue

doesn't sound like the words of an adult coming out of a kid's mouth. She's headstrong and emotional and makes rash decisions and thinks she knows best. Sound like anyone you know? Yeah, sounds like me when I was 15.

* A teenage main character who has a good relationship with her mom! Sure, there are bobbles here and there and Julie can be kind of bratty sometimes, but it was so nice to see a mother and daughter working together. I liked that the thing that really helped Julie find her power was the fact that her mom was in danger. A great change of pace from many other YA books.

* The book is a quick read and is very fast paced. The action doesn't really lag, and the plot is pretty simple. There are enough loose ends to justify a sequel, but not so many that you think you missed something by the time you finish.

Here are some things that I didn't like:

* Many of Julie's problems seemingly could have been avoided if the main character had just asked for help in the first place. I know that this is reality for teenagers -- they want to do things themselves, they want to prove themselves -- and so this is where YA books so often show their 'you're not my core demographic' colors for adult readers like myself. Julie was mature or self-aware enough to know at several points that she wasn't an advanced enough witch to solve the problems on her own, but she still waited until the problems were huge to bring in her mom for help.

* Julie's BFF Marcus has been secretly crushing on her for years and years. The book blurb doesn't mention romance, but it's in here, and while it's sweetly done, I still sighed whenever that plot point came up. I would love to see more books where the male and female leads are just friends and not nursing secret feelings.

* The villains in this book had me rolling my eyes for reasons that I can't really talk about without giving away spoilers, but suffice it to say, I am trying very hard not to climb back up on my Certified Feminist-y Book Blogger Soapbox to complain about it.

Overall, I thought the book was okay. It wasn't anything too ground-breaking, but it was a nice change of pace from many other YA paranormal/urban fantasy books out there. Julie doesn't fall for someone morally ambiguous or unreachable or who could possibly kill her. She doesn't suffer through unbearable traumas. She's just a normal girl, who happens to be an extraordinary witch. There is some violence and mild profanity in the book, but nothing that most teenagers aren't already exposed to.

Hayley Arens says

This book was described to me as "The Witch-Buffy of ghosts," which both intrigued and established a high bar for me.

Nothing will ever be as good as the Buffster, and the only comparison really comes in a good but snarky heroine, something that is wholly absent from YA. Heroines are either good and weak or strong and immoral. I'm a strong, moral girl so I like to see her in YA. That's what Julie is, the strong good girl.

The pacing was great, everything happens fast and just over the course of a few I hate it when authors try fantasy, but lack the general creativity to do so. The stranger that you can make things, within society, the more tangible it feels. Cummings definitely doesn't succumb to that trend, with pointed, decisive prose, and unbelievably believable details.

My only complaint is that I wish it was longer. :) Can't wait until the sequel!

