



The Swallow: A Ghost Story

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In 1960s Toronto, two girls retreat to their attics to escape the loneliness and isolation of their lives. Polly lives in a house bursting at the seams with people, while Rose is often left alone by her busy parents. Polly is a down-to-earth dreamer with a wild imagination and an obsession with ghosts; Rose is a quiet, ethereal waif with a sharp tongue. Despite their differences, both girls spend their days feeling invisible and seek solace in books and the cozy confines of their respective attics. But soon they discover they aren't alone--they're actually neighbors, sharing a wall. They develop an unlikely friendship, and Polly is ecstatic to learn that Rose can actually see and talk to ghosts. Maybe she will finally see one too! But is there more to Rose than it seems? Why does no one ever talk to her? And why does she look so... ghostly? When the girls find a tombstone with Rose's name on it in the cemetery and encounter an angry spirit in her house who seems intent on hurting Polly, they have to unravel the mystery of Rose and her strange family... before it's too late.

The Swallow: A Ghost Story Details

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Author : Charis Cotter

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From Reader Review The Swallow: A Ghost Story for online ebook

Butterblume says

4,5 Sterne *_*

Melissa Chung says

Like every book that I drag ass on to read, this was pretty amazing. I always have books that I'm dying to read and then leave them hanging for a good 6 months.

The Swallow is a middle grade paranormal book about two little girls. I think they are 12 or so. One girl is named Polly the other is Rose.

Polly is a feisty girl. Out of 7 kids she is the one that feels left out. She always feels invisible. You would think in a household the size of hers there would be people to talk to. Her older sisters are obnoxious, her twin brothers Matthew and Mark, (she calls the Horrors) never leave her alone... and then there is Susie the baby.

She is a contradiction. She wants her parents to pay attention to her, but she doesn't want attention from her siblings. She wants peace and quiet. One day she finds out that inside her closet is the trapdoor to the attic. She crawls up there to hide from her terrible 8 year old brothers and hears singing.

Rose is practically the complete opposite of Polly. She is an only child. Home alone the majority of the time. Everyone...teachers, kids at school, even her parents ignore her. She IS invisible. She tends to hide in the attic when she feels sad and lonely. One day while she is up there...she hears a ghost. Not a ghost she can see...because she always sees ghosts, ever since she can remember, but a invisible ghost.

The two girls get to talking and realize they are both not ghosts and that they share a wall in between their attics.

This is their story. Rose telling Polly how seeing ghosts is miserable and Polly being super excited that Rose can see ghosts.

This book is split up into two POV's so you get a chance to hear both girls stories almost simultaneously. The story goes in one POV say Polly's and then it switches to Rose so you hear her inner thoughts and what she thinks about what Polly is saying. I've never read a story like that and loved it. Everything gets covered that way and we know exactly how each girl is feeling at all times.

This book could be considered slow in the fact you don't find out the truth until the very end. But I loved the pacing. I only barely figured it out a few chapters before the reveal. I even got misty eyed toward the end.

I great middle grade about friendship, courage and ghosts :D

Elizabeth (Miss Eliza) says

Polly and Rose live next door to each other. Polly's house is too full of people and her macabre tastes make her long to see a different kind of person, one who is no longer alive, ie, a ghost. Rose's house is the opposite of Polly's and is always empty and Rose has the dubious ability to see ghosts. The two soon strike up an unlikely friendship and Polly is right jealous of Rose's "gift." Yet maybe there's a reason she can see ghosts? There's a tombstone behind their houses with Rose's name on it... perhaps Rose herself is a ghost? One thing is clear, there is something strange going on and Polly thinks that the two of them need to get to the bottom of the spooky goings on; because one of them might be a ghost.

If you've ever thought, wow there really needs to be a middle grade version of *The Sixth Sense* set in 1960s Toronto, then I have good news for you! If on the other hand you're looking for a story that isn't predictable like, oh, anything ever done by M. Night Shyamalan, look elsewhere. The main problem with *The Swallow* is that everything is so obvious. It's not like there was one of two things that surprised me. Oh no. Every. Single. Thing. Was. Expected. It's like Cotter has no ability to dissemble. She can't hide her story structure, and she certainly can't hide her big reveals. From the second Polly went into her attic I knew that there'd be a secret passage, because I'd read C. S. Lewis's *The Magician's Nephew*. Yeah, you didn't do a good job of hiding where that attic came from Cotter, much like everything else.

But as to each reveal, they were delivered exactly when you'd expect it. There was no flow to this story, no chance for surprises. It felt as if Cotter sat down and wrote the most rigid structure she could to tell her story, with each reveal carefully placed, and when she went from outline to prose not one thing was allowed to vary from that outline. I felt at times as if the book was more a rigid structure of steal that had words around it then an actual narrative. You could feel the story gripping the spine trying to be a real book. A good author transports us and makes us not see the craft behind the work. Cotter pulled back the curtain on the wizard and showed us that writing isn't magic, it's labor intensive, and not just for her, but for us as readers as well. The only positive that can be said for this book is that it was a short read so the pain was quickly over.

Though what is most aggravating to me is that this could have been a unique story! We have the 1960s, we have the ghostly aunt/doppelganger, vintage shoes, creepy pictures of Rose and Winifred dressed alike, and yet it felt like it could be happening right now because none of these interesting aspects are delved into or exploited for the benefit of the story! Instead we get two girls, Polly and Rose, who are just as annoying and whiny as any kid today with no sense given to us readers of how they fit into their time to better explore the sixties. They are completely unlikable in the beginning, and even if you grudgingly like them a little later, the jeopardy they get placed in is so badly contrived that they are never able to rise up and save the book. In a true sign that shows how utterly commonplace everything about the book is, the girl's voices are basically the same. If it weren't for their different situations and the little label saying who's head we're in, I doubt you could tell which girl was which.

As for the ghosts. Well, I have problems with them. First, let's take the ghosts as a whole, and I won't talk about how thick Rose is, we'll just accept that as a given. The ghosts seem to have been given stupid characteristics, like the ability to eat and touch so that we wouldn't know that Polly was dead all along. Oops, I hope you hadn't planned on reading this book, because yeah, spoilers! Though with Cotter's writing if she'd been allowed to write the book's blurb, well, she would have signaled you into that twist in just those few short sentences. Since when can ghosts eat? Like seriously, I think this would be the number one thing on my "things ghosts can't do list." Haunt, yeah, move objects, yeah, give me nightmares, yeah, eat my food, NO! Also more specifically, Winifred is like the worst developed ghost ever. She's angry and crazy and remorseful and a loving sister? Yes, people can be a cornucopia of different personality traits, but, you know

what? It has to be explained. Just having her go from crazy to contrite, it doesn't work.

But what I really want to know is was this book a teaching moment? So many of the reviews and blurbs talk about how this book will help kids with concepts like grief and acceptance. If this book was written to tell a rigidly plotted story and it just happened to help with grief and acceptance, well, I'm ok with that. On the other hand, if this book was written just to teach kids about these concepts? NO! I am not a fan of the "teaching moment." I want learning to be a byproduct of reading not the be all end all. Plus, when did everything have to be made "improving" for children? All literature had to teach them lessons. All toys had to be educational. WTF people! How about literature is there to teach kids the joy of reading? And how about toys being there to grow their imagination? I loved toys but I was slow to books. If I had read this book as a kid, it would have put me even more off reading, it's middle grade meh.

The Last Word: "Skylark"

Tasha says

Set in Toronto in the sixties, this book is about two lonely girls living in homes that attach to one another. Polly has a huge family with foster siblings too. She feels ignored by all of them, though she can't get away from her twin brothers and their noise. That's how she finds her way into the attic as a safe place away from the bustle of her family. Polly has always wanted to meet a ghost, which is why she thinks that Rose is a ghost the first time she hears her singing in her neighboring attic. But Rose turns out to be a real girl, who just happens to look very ghostlike too. Rose has always been able to see ghosts, and she hates it since they never leave her alone. Rose spends a lot of her days alone, no one at school talks to her, her parents are very busy business people, and the housekeeper ignores her. So the two girls quickly form a close friendship, made even closer by the frightening ghost that looks just like Rose and who threatens Polly's life. Can the two girls figure out who this ghost is and what she wants?

I seem to be on a roll with Canadian children's book authors lately, and this is another wonderful Canadian read. Cotter creates a mystery inside a ghost story that twists and turns delightfully along the way. Readers will think they have it all figured out and then the story will change. Yet somehow Cotter makes it all work and in the end the entire novel makes great sense, enough that readers will want to start again to see the clues they may have missed.

The writing here is exceptional. Cotter writes with a confident voice, one that allows each of these girls to be entirely unique. The two of them are quite different from one another, each clearly resulting from their very divergent upbringings. The friendship also reads as real with small arguments happening regularly and the two girls having to repair these small issues. Through the entire book there is a wonderful ghostly presence, a feeling of being in a real place but one unseen by others. It's a place that is a delight to visit.

Perfect for reading under the covers with a flashlight, this strong ghost story is both entertaining and riveting. Appropriate for ages 9-12.

Jessica says

'Twas a bad case of cover love that drew me to this book. In a world packed to the brim with covers that

blend together, the beautiful simplicity of The Swallow: A Ghost Story called to me. Once I'd read that it was set in the 1960's, and rife with ghostly happenings, I was sold. I love Middle Grade reads anyway, but this one in particular seemed something I'd all but devour.

Things started out well enough. Although I wasn't completely in sync with Polly or Rose, I was fascinated by their shared ability to see ghostly apparitions. From the first moment that Polly mentioned seeing the specters, the book had this slight air of menace. I know, that sounds odd. It's just that Cotter does a wonderful job of helping the reader understand that Polly's particular ghost isn't quite nice. Not nice at all, in fact. That being said, for the age group that this is aimed to, I'd be a bit wary. There are mentions of ghostly attacks that, while they didn't bother me one bit, might spook a younger reader.

What I couldn't get enough of during this read, truth be told, was the setting. I don't want to say too much and risk spoiling anything, but I would so have loved to live in Polly's or Rose's homes. They spoke of times gone past. Of hidden secrets, and musty attics. Even now, as an adult, I can't help but fall in love with places like these. When I was a child I would have loved to explore a place like this, ghosts or not. I suppose things never change, do they?

I wish I knew what exactly kept me from really enjoying this story. It truly has all the markings of a journey I'd normally fall in love with. Cotter writes of friendship and mystery, all with an undercurrent of deep uncertainty. I didn't dislike Polly or Rose, and the writing was smooth enough. Somehow it just lacked that bit of extra. The piece that keeps me glued to the page, and wanting to come back for more. That's all I can offer up to you. The Swallow: A Ghost Story is a fine read. It'll appeal to many a bookworm. It just wasn't exactly what I was looking for.

Wart Hill says

You can read this and other reviews at [Things I Find While Shelving](#)

[I received a free ARC of this book via NetGalley. This fact has no bearing on my review.]

This was quite the page turner!

Polly longs to see ghosts, she devours ghost stories and dreams of one day meeting a spirit. Rose *does* see ghosts, and it isn't a picnic. They're everywhere and she has no idea why and she just wants them to go away.

When Rose moves into the house next door to Polly, they meet by each initially believing the other is a ghost. They are in their attics, and Polly hears Rose singing through the wall and assumes she must be a ghost. They meet to prove to each other that they are alive, but when they find a grave stone with Rose's name on it, a whole mystery unfolds before them.

Rose and Polly work together to discover the secrets Rose's family has been keeping since long before she was born. But as they dig deeper and deeper, Rose begins to worry that she is, in fact, a ghost. Through all of this, Rose and Polly develop a great friendship, but there's another secret neither of them sees coming that could ruin it forever.

[The Swallow](#) keeps you reading. The characters are wonderful, the story is captivating, and though the style isn't one of my personal favorites (alternating, labeled POVs), it really works here - though I couldn't tell you

why I feel that way, heh.

Overall, a wonderful story.

Diana Iozzia says

"The Swallow" was the second book that I had read by the middle-grade author, Charis Cotter. I was very eager to begin this novel after reading her "The Painting". Both premises of each book intrigued me as a twenty-one year old, because these were eerie and creepy stories that I would have loved as a middle-grade reader if they were around when I was that young. I was explaining to someone yesterday that, of course I still love middle-grade fiction, because I loved it years ago.

"The Swallow" follows (ha, rhyme) Polly and Rose, who become friends as they sit in their neighboring attics, only connected by a secret passageway. Polly has the uncomfortable and worrying fear that Rose is dead and is a ghost, while Rose is absolutely fed up with seeing ghosts all of the time. She knows she's alive, but why does she see them at breakfast, at school, everywhere she goes?

A few fascinating and heartbreakingly twists and turns occur, and we leave Rose understanding her true purpose as a girl who can see ghosts, that she is to help them move on. This is a very sad, very beautiful book. This novel is more about friendship, while "The Painting" is more about family, but they are both very relative to middle-grade readers. I sincerely enjoyed "The Swallow" more than "The Painting", but these are both excellent novels that I've had the pleasure to receive and review. The dialogue is believable, the sadness is easily felt and sympathetic, the love is palpable between Polly and Rose. I thoroughly recommend this.

Naturally, every book does come without faults. Who would I be as a reviewer if I didn't mention the not so wonderful aspects? To be honest, there really weren't that many. I think that the plot twists were excellent and very fitting for the story, but they were a bit **WOW RIGHT NOW IN YOUR FACE AHHH HERE YOU ARE BE SAD NOW**. I wish they unfolded a little more naturally rather than the last third of the book. I felt I needed a little more time to recover than I received. I usually am not a fan of excessive resolution, but I would have liked a little bit more in the last two chapters or so. After a massive plot twist as it was, I needed a little time to nurse the booboo.

Additionally, perhaps the plot twist could have been a little predictable? I in no way predicted it, but it was a very distracting day with my lunatic dog, so I could have been reading this more intently than I was. So maybe some of you could predict, but not me! Lastly, the only last thing I dislike was that there were a few moments of confusion where I had to re-read passages, because the way the sentences were worded. This is definitely one of those books where each chapter ends dramatically like "And then, I found a hidden door." "Then, I saw a shadow behind me." It's a bit cliffhanger-y, and that kind of confuses me occasionally as to what I read **rriiiight** before the cliffhanger. I think if you end up reading this, you'll understand what I mean when we reach the point where the girls find a secret box.

In conclusion, I absolutely loved this. Charis Cotter is a fantastic middle-grade writer, and I cannot wait to continue to read her books.

I received this book as a complementary review copy.

P.S. I mentioned this in my review of "The Painting", but my goodness, I absolutely love the cover art.

Beautiful selections as always.

Manybooks says

Set in Toronto's Cabbagetown in 1963 (with a wonderful sense of place but perhaps at times a trifle too non specific a sense of time and popular culture), Charis Cotter's The Swallow: A Ghost Story features as double protagonists two young girls who although they both initially believe the other to be a ghost soon become best friends (and indeed, one of the two girls actually does end up really being a bona fide departed spirit and I for one have most certainly been much surprised not only that one of the two main characters actually was a ghost, actually was deceased throughout the entire storyline of The Swallow: A Ghost Story, but also who of the two girls the departed spirit has ended up being).

Now the two main characters of The Swallow: A Ghost Story (Polly and Rose) are presented and depicted by Charis Cotter as being kindred spirits (and no pun is intended here) but also as hailing from very different types of families. Polly's family (her father is a United Church minister) is large and boisterous, with both biological and foster siblings for Polly, who tends to feel invisible and sometimes even cast aside, and actually, her greatest wish and desire is to meet and talk to a real ghost (or to encounter someone who has experienced meeting and talking to a spirit), whereas Rose is the only and generally very lonely child of busy and business oriented parents who has in fact and indeed spent her entire life trying to ignore the many ghosts she regularly does see (and who always seem to want her help and support in some way). However, even though Polly and Rose are from different backgrounds, they both do equally share feelings of intense loneliness (to the point of feeling that they are nobodies, that nobody really cares for them or seemingly wants them).

The Swallow: A Ghost Story alternates between Rose's and Polly's first person narratives, and while the chapters are for the most part short and concise, Charis Cotter has always and fortunately, appreciatively managed to create right from the onset of The Swallow: A Ghost Story two very distinct main protagonists with equally distinct and personal voices (in other words, one is always entirely sure that when Polly is narrating, she is herself and when Rose is narrating, she is herself, with no wishy-washiness and no confusion as to who might be speaking). And while from a realism point of departure, I should probably find Polly more believable and more personally relatable than Rose with her gift (or curse) of being able to see and talk to ghosts (and her many family secrets), if truth be told, Rose actually feels a bit more like me, a bit more akin to me than Polly (and no indeed, I do not and have never seen ghosts, I just feel that on a spiritual and emotional level, Rose feels just a bit closer to me and my way of seeing the world, although Polly is also a beautifully depicted and intensely likeable, lovable character).

While The Swallow: A Ghost Story most definitely does feature and show more than a goodly number of departed spirits and is often genuinely spooky and a creepy (with some angry ghosts who are in sad circumstances but still of course dangerous), this novel is also and importantly not just some tale of horror and mayhem, but a lovely and often sweetly tender family story of friendship, of loneliness, of finding one's voice and of how long buried family secrets can have a devastating effect on future generations. And while the ending of The Swallow: A Ghost Story has definitely been rather a surprise and not what I was at all expecting in many ways, it has also been both satisfying and emotional, although I do personally wish that Rose and Polly's friendship had been shown as enduring not only as fond remembrances but with the two girls remaining real flesh and blood friends forever even though one of them has turned out to be a departed spirit (but I am not going to tell who, as that would be too much of a spoiler).

Raelynn says

I purchased this book with the intent of donating it to the local library but decided to give it a quick read before doing so and I'm so glad I did. A great story about friendship, family, and acceptance. Polly and Rose are both likable characters which most children (pre teens) will be able to find common ground. Filled with fun, mystery, and a little spookyness too. Hopefully a few young library goers will enjoy it as much as I did.

Lisa Vegan says

It's best going into this book knowing nothing. Unfortunately, I knew too much going in, and almost waited years to read it so I'd forget. Actually, I did sort of forget, or rather I couldn't remember which of three specific scenarios was part of the reveal. I'm grateful that I had to figure out some of the mystery as I was reading.

I don't normally like ghost stories but I really liked this one. I also liked the two main girl characters and their friendship story and I appreciated that they were readers. I enjoyed the scenes in the library and the references to stories the girls were reading.

This story is both sad and fun. I'd probably have loved it when I was about 10 years old or so. Figuring out what's going on is entertaining. All of the characters are interesting.

I do think the ending felt rushed. I longed for one more specific scene, but maybe that was the point? I was left feeling a tad melancholy but in a way it was a comforting book, an almost joyful book.

Steph says

Several books that I've read recently promised ghostly content, but ultimately disappointed me. I'm happy to say that *The Swallow* is a satisfying ghost story that really delivers.

The Swallow is the engaging tale of Rose and Polly, two girls growing up in Canada in 1963, sharing a preoccupation with ghosts. The ghosts are creepy, and these girls are really brave as they try to resolve the spooky mysteries in their lives, whilst also exploring their new friendship.

But while I adore the story, there are some frustrating weak points in *The Swallow*. Each chapter includes alternating viewpoints between Polly and Rose, and while these girls are distinct characters, their narrative voices are very similar. When the two interact with each other, I occasionally mixed up whose perspective I was reading from. I also feel as though I wasn't deeply immersed in these characters' lives. There isn't enough detail, and I didn't really get to know any of the secondary characters. Of course, Rose and Polly are at the center of the story, but that doesn't mean that the background should be casually glossed over.

However, despite its flaws, I loved reading *The Swallow*. I expected the story to be very predictable, but it's definitely not - the mystery kept me wondering for quite a long time. The plot is creepy and unexpected, and quite heartfelt as well. A perfect read for getting your yearly fix of autumn spookiness!

Thank you to NetGalley and Random House for providing me with a copy of this book in return for an honest review.

Rosanna Leo says

I loved *The Swallow: A Ghost Story*. It ticks a lot of my personal boxes. I grew up adoring ghost stories, so I identified with the plucky Polly who wants nothing more than to see a wandering spirit. On the other hand, I was a rather morose child, so I also identified with the sombre Rose, who feels like a ghost because no one in her family seems to talk to her anymore. I normally don't read children's fiction but this one drew me in right away. It's set in Toronto, my home town, so I recognized many of the settings (the eerie Necropolis cemetery, the Bloor viaduct, many of the street names). I love how the author weaves this tale and the reader is never quite sure if Rose is alive or dead. The ending was perfect, or at least, it felt perfect to me. This book delivers on sweetness and the friendship factor and I loved these two girls. Happy ending? Well, that depends on your perspective but from the beginning the reader knows something is amiss between Polly and Rose and the spirits haunting Rose's home. I found it a satisfying conclusion and I'd be pleased to read more of Charis Cotter's work.

Emily says

Oh my god.

Any words I type here won't even come close to doing this work justice. It is a glorious and terrible thing to love a book this much. It's overwhelming and wonderful and takes up all your senses and any possible bits of brain space in your free time and sucks you into a world that feels as real and possible as the one you inhabit. It takes hold of your emotions and you are powerless to do anything but hold on for the ride and hope to goodness that author has wings to bring you down to Earth again safely.

And dear god, can Charis Cotter soar like the most agile of swallows.

Wow. Okay. Where to even begin?

If you want a synopsis then I'd definitely suggest reading the summary because I'm terrified of giving spoilers, and trust me: **you do not want to be spoiled for this novel. I repeat. Do. Not. Spoil. Yourself.** Alright, now that that's cleared up...

First off, it has been a good long time since a book has been able to grab me enough to make me devour 150 pages and make it feel like nothing. I basically read this in three sittings, and if it wasn't for life responsibilities and sleep, I have zero doubt in my mind that (provided I had enough chocolate) this could've been finished cover-to-cover in one go. For awhile now I've been wondering if I'd lost my ability to sit down and read for hours like that; devouring page after page without looking at the clock or the page numbers in curiosity, or even - gasp! - checking reddit for more dog gifs and the latest tifu. I am so incredibly grateful to Cotter for giving me back that reassurance that with the right book, I can still marathon with the best of 'em.

The writing style of the book really helps to drag you in, I think. Extremely short chapters with the same

structure of our two perspectives; Polly, and then Rose. (view spoiler) Amazingly, it managed not feel feel rushed though. Cotter has an astounding ability to put you right in the characters' mind with a few well-placed and well-chosen words. Which of leads me to...

Our characters. Gah. So many emotions. I love both our protagonists with an insane amount of intensity, but I have to say that Rose is my favourite by a hair. I'm a sucker for the goth, black-loving, quiet-with-a-lot-of-loud-thoughts, brooding, book and music loving type of girl. So sue me. But Polly's upbeat and ghost loving personality complimented her beautifully, and somehow their friendship works. Oh, how it works. I'll tell you this much: it's so incredibly beautiful to watch two people who've never had someone to call friend find a buddy for the first time. My heart broke and mended itself for the first time when they actually got to see each other face-to-face and somehow moved past wanting to smack each other in exasperation and slid right into comfortable camaraderie. The side characters were done really well too. I don't wanna say who because spoilers, but there were a couple characters who kept popping up in the beginning that annoyed the hell out of me that I wanted to hug really super tight by the last chapter. That right there is the sign of a good author.

Also, this is technically a middle-grade novel (found in my library's children's fiction), but hoo boy, do the themes ever get adult?! Again, some of the stuff I can't mention in explicit detail, but I *can* say that it's incredibly well done and accessible for different levels of comprehension and appreciation at different age levels. It gets spooky too. I'm not (too) ashamed to say that I read a lot of ghost books and watch even more ghost shows, and when I got to a certain attic scene while I was curled up reading in bed at night (with a small lamp as my only source of light), I got that tingling feeling on the back of my neck that made me look up and reassess the odd shadows being cast on my wall. Y'know. To check for anything out of place. Just to be safe. I also may or may not have looked at a couple pictures of my adorable dog for reassurance before heading back in to finish the chapter.

I did have nightmares that night if anyone was wondering. Anyways. You get it. Real spooky.

And another thing. The level of emotion in the book was absolute *perfection*. I didn't feel hit over the head with it. On the contrary, the wave of heartbreak and horror and realization and fear snuck up on me and crashed into the feels department of my brain before I even knew what the hell was happening.

Also, **did I mention that this is Canadian yet?!? Because it's Canadian. *Torontonian*. Yeah, you heard me.** Charis Cotter currently lives in Newfoundland (that's the East-coast for all you non-Canucks), but grew up in downtown TO. I seriously almost shit my pants the first time Toronto was mentioned and proceeded to squeal like a piglet being introduced to their first mud puddle with every reference that followed. I very nearly had a stroke when it mentioned very real streets and libraries that I have myself walked down/visited before (shoutout to anyone else who has waited for the 506 to get to Parliament Library in rush hour - I feel your pain). It was so cool to see a library I visit get its name in print and be featured so prominently in a book. So freaking cool.

I remember getting close to the end thinking: *There's no way this can all make sense. There's no way this can wrap up nicely.* And then Charis Cotter saw my doubt and raised me the best freaking conclusion to a book I've read in a long time. It made me cry and want to throw something and find my Mom and hug her tightly and never let go and kiss my Gram on the cheek and go back and re-read the whole book to find all the little hidden clues I had missed.

In case it wasn't already blatantly clear - I love this book. I think you should probably read it, because there's a pretty good chance that you're going to love it too.

Milliebot says

This review and others posted over at [my blog](#).

Set in Canada in the 1960s, Polly and Rose meet after Rose's parents move to the other side of the two-family home. Rose attends private school, where she's largely unnoticed by classmates and teachers alike. Her parents are almost never home, working hard for the sock company that her grandfather founded. Rose deals mostly with the housekeeper, Kendrick, who barely speaks to her, leaving Rose feeling (justifiably) isolated and alone, seldom speaking or even eating.

Polly, on the other hand, can't get a moment alone in her house. She has an older sister and two younger twin brothers, as well as three foster sisters. Her parents seem to have no time for her, as they're busy working and keeping up with the rest of the family. Polly escapes to a room in the attic, desperate for some time to herself (though her little brothers know just where she's hiding) when she hears singing coming from the other side of the attic. After constantly wishing for an adventure like she reads about in books, Polly believes that the voice she hears is coming from a ghost.

The girls form an unlikely friendship, after much resistance on Rose's part. Polly, while obnoxious in her persistence in believing Rose is a ghost, is utterly charming. I enjoyed how each girl's life delved into how loneliness can manifest and affect us all differently. It added emotional depth to the fantasy plot and a quote I found especially moving comes from Polly, in reference to her mother always being busy with the other children:

“She always thinks I can manage, but sometimes I need her and she just isn’t there.”

There's a bit of mystery involving Rose's family history (nice little rhyme there) and an actual ghost in the story as well. The story is told in short little chapters (one or two pages or so) from each girl's point of view. They often pick up where the other's narration leaves off and it kept the plot moving forward, while the two perspectives kept me trying to figure out what was actually going on.

The end was somewhat predictable, yet as the story moved towards its close, it began to have a bigger impact on me. The more I thought about everything that had happened, the more moved I was, and this book definitely made me cry. There's certainly a somewhat uplifting message contained in this ghost story, but I'll be honest, this book made me depressed. But that's a good thing! I'm always going on about books that get me going emotionally and I love anything that has such a deep impact on me.

I 100% recommend this story and I'm excited about Cotter's next release in 2018. If you like your middle-grade with a darker tone, but emotional depth, I think you'll enjoy *The Swallow*.

I received this book for free from LibraryThing in exchange for an honest review. This does not affect my opinion of the book or the content of my review. All opinions in this post are my own.

Susana says

4.5 stars

Release Date: September, 9th

Arc provided by Tundra Books through Netgalley

Things you should know about this story:

Incredibly addictive , once you start it, I dare you to stop reading it.

The beginning is pretty much perfect.

We are given a plot that starts with a very likeable heroine, and a small insight into her less than "perfect life". Polly is a young girl on the verge of teenagehood , and it shows :)

There's no place for me. I'm getting squeezed out of my own house. My parents want to save the world, and they're doing it one unwanted kid at a time.

Told in dual points of view, "The Swallow" is a story about two girls that live next door to each other, each of them with their own very different lives...

Rose is the quiet girl, the one that feels abandoned by her parents, and basically ignored by the rest of the world. If only the ghosts that she sees would behave in the same fashion, her life would be much more bearable.

Polly is a force of nature. She is lively, with a large _ and what she feels as imposed _ family, and unlike Rose she would love to see a ghost...

This a story about friendship and how friendship can make you stronger.

Once these two find one another, their lives will never be the same.

The writing

I can't help but recurring to a cliché to define it: **Engaging, witty, and concise.**

With its first phase _ see phrase copy/pasted above _ we are immediately thrown into the story! The author knows what she's doing, and she caught the story's tone perfectly!

If this were a song, Adele would be singing it.

By having two very different heroines, the author was able to _lets say _ lift the story's "natural" bleakness.

Rose who has been haunted all her life by ghosts, carries this unbearable weight and this dark cloud with her. She feels as if they want to drain her of her life force. And we feel this, while reading it.

The atmosphere of the setting is just right.

But then comes Polly, curious Polly who would love nothing more than to see ghosts, and someone that in the end is able to change the way Rose feels about her "gift" or "curse". Polly with her red coat, and her enthusiasm for life, someone who _despite all that takes place _in the end is able to keep the narrative more

grounded in the everyday life.

The mystery

Very well done! I take my hat to the author! ;)

Of course I am not going to reveal it!! lol So you can keep on reading this review:)

I am just going to say that I kept "piling all the clues" in my head, and trying to figure it out.

I knew that most probably I was being "directed" in the wrong direction _seeing the movie The Sixth Sense did wonders for my investigative skills! lol _ and something kept telling me that "the egg incident" _read the book!_ was important, but I just couldn't figure it out.

Hmppf, who am I kidding?

I couldn't figure it out, until it was almost spelled out to me!

First I thought it was the obvious one...then I thought it was both of them...then the least likely of them...but the twins DECEIVED ME!! o_O

Arghhh!

So, yes, as you can read, I loved this story!

So why not five star rating?

Because I can't help feeling that the girls pov's, should have been longer. They kept changing too often, and there was a moment in which I couldn't help feeling that they were disrupting the story's flow.

Besides that, I will say it again, I loved reading this story. And I am really happy that I requested, and most importantly that I was granted access to read it.

Thank you....I've just added another book to my to "buy list". o_O

September is going to be a disaster :/

Meanwhile I will try to restrain myself from doing...this..to my friends! ;)
