



The Cheerleader

Caroline B. Cooney

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Cheerleaders are beautiful, popular and exciting - girls that Althea longs to be. But Althea is nobody - she gets no phone calls, shares no laughter and has no friends. Then one day she meets him, a vampire who offers to make her a cheerleader in exchange for a simple bargain.

The Cheerleader Details

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From Reader Review The Cheerleader for online ebook

Rachel says

Althea craves popularity. She wants to be a cheerleader - swooned over by all the jocks and the envy of all the girls. When, against custom, she opens the shuttered tower room in her house, she releases a vampire who makes a deal with her: If she brings him victims, he will give her popularity. Althea finds herself spiraling out of control as the vampire asks for more and more - and she feels she has to give it to him or suffer public humiliation.

Looked at from a superficial point of view, there's really not much to this book. It's barely 200 pages long, and has little plot or character development. It's pretty standard for those Point Horror books that were being pumped out in the '90s. Teen readers should be wary - this is a quick, fluffy read with a (how dare Ms. Cooney?!) BAD vampire. Yes. That's right. His skin looks and smells like soggy mushrooms. He feeds on the weakness of teenagers. And he doesn't sparkle. He is in no way, shape, or form romantic. It was SUCH a wonderful change. As long as bad vampires don't insult your intelligence, you'll enjoy this book if you're 11-14ish. Or you might enjoy it if you're older and enjoy exploring ideas.

What I liked about this book was that it was more meaningful on a deeper level. There were hints all along that Althea could have made herself popular on her own - that her own attitude ensured her unpopularity. She assumed no one knew she existed, so she hid from everyone. Result - nobody paid her any attention. This is also a story about how far some people are willing to go in order to gain what they want. She sacrificed her morals and trampled on other people in order to achieve her goals - and then she was dissatisfied with the results. It's a story about being true to yourself and how your goals will be more lasting when you achieve them through hard work instead of back-stabbing. Any book that makes me think earns points with me!

Another thing that made me think: where the heck were her parents through all of this?! They weren't mentioned even once! Did Cooney mean to do that? I read the second book in the trilogy many years ago, and I remember THAT protagonist had parents...

Jordan Rodgers says

I love Caroline B. Cooney. I really do. But she does not do the vampire story very well. It was different. But not nearly as interesting as other vampire stories. It was way too tame. Not once in the entire book did you get to read about the vampire doing what vampires do, sucking blood. I wanted way more action.

Carol [Goodreads Addict] says

I picked this up at a used book sale as part of a trilogy, all bound together. I thought it sounded interesting but believe me, it wasn't. Althea enjoyed popularity and success in middle school. She is now a sophomore in high school but all her friends have divided off into groups and she just can't seem to fit in with any of them. She so wants to be popular and to be a cheerleader. She moves into a huge house with a tower. Upon opening the shutters in the tower, she frees a vampire. He promises her that in exchange for him granting her the popularity she so desires, she must do something for him. She must ultimately decide how much she is

willing to sacrifice to make her wishes come true. In my opinion, this story completely lacked in content and did not flow at all. I found Althea to be shallow and completely uninteresting. The other two stories in the trilogy will have to wait, if I decide to read them at all. I do not recommend this book.

Stephanie Davies says

For a throwaway YA vampire fiction, *The Cheerleader* is actually pretty immense. It's so readable that I've returned to it every few years and I'll probably be reading it into my thirties.

I still remember vividly so many scenes from this book. The party, when she sits on the stairs and can't make conversation because there are so many different types of music coming from the different rooms of her house. Or how she dances in Pizzahut because she's popular, finally popular, and that's what popular kids do apparently.

Althea just wants a friend, and I find it pretty easy to empathise with that. The vampire (who is repulsive -- a nice change from the modern-day sparklers) promises to give her what she wants. As contemporary vampire fiction goes, I would venture to say that, despite its brevity, this one's up there with Stephen King and Anne Rice in its originality. Definitely better than *Twilight* or a *Rachel Caine* novel.

Layla says

Despite some hilarious passages, this is pretty good for a Point Horror and quite creepy. Possibly my favourite so far.

Chloe Pudner says

'His skin, the colour of mushrooms, faded into the dawn. His black drapery vanished among the hemlocks. The air stayed thick and swampy where he stood.'

'The Cheerleader' was the first ever book from the point horror series that I had ever read, which had been recommended to me by my Auntie who had read these books when she was my age. I chose 'The Cheerleader' as my first book as I liked the fact it was based around vampires. But honestly I was kind of disappointed, I was expecting a lot more. Hence why I only gave this book 3 stars. I think the book had a good storyline, and I like the originality of the vampire, he was like a breath of fresh air compared to the 'gorgeously perfect' vampires we see in today's horror books. It was a little bit on the cheesy side and a very quick read, I enjoyed all the characters and could relate to the main character, Althea. Personally I don't think I would reread this book but I will definitely give the other books in the trilogy a go.

Ken says

The Cheerleader has one of the most iconic covers in the Point Horror series. But how does the book fair?

I actually felt it had similarities with Sinclair Smith's - Dream Date where the main protagonist Althea popularity is improved by a supernatural character.

This time a vampire has made a pact with Althea as he has the ability to make her popular whilst in return she must nominate a person for him to drain their energy from.

Of course it's a take on the price of fame. But once the vampire has helped Althea to gain popularity, he uses it against her and threatens to take it away.

It's easy to see Althea being trapped into this situation and feeding her 'addiction'.

An enjoyable quick read, brought back so many teenage memories of devouring these!

Lena says

This story was an interesting take on the vampire mythos. I haven't read a vampire book where the vampire is not the love interest...well, ever (except Dracula). So it was a surprise when I opened it and realized the vampire was not going to be her boyfriend. In fact, he's pretty gross. Cooney is wonderfully descriptive in the grotesque aspects of the vampire. Skin the color of mushrooms? Ew.

The story itself was a bit meh. A "Nobody" in high school will do anything to be popular, so she makes a deal with the devil (er, vampire) and is given everything she ever dreamed of...but at a cost. So, it is a moral tale for sure. However, I just wasn't able to connect very well with Althea, though I did understand her longing to have friends, to be loved, etc. Don't we all want those things? However, the telling was sort of removed, so it felt very clinical and impersonal as we studied her journey. For that reason, it didn't grip me as much as it could have.

Overall, it's a good creepy book for older kids/younger teens but won't stand among my favorite vampire novels. Worth adding to your TBR if you're a fan of original vampire stories.

Deborah says

This was my favorite book as a pre-teen. Back then, I was heavily into the Scholastic Point Horror books, and this one has stuck with me through the decades. I decided to re-read it this week, and was pleasantly surprised to find that it holds up for me, even at the more advanced age of 37.

Written with luscious, seductive language, The Cheerleader immediately transports you back to your teenage years, when feelings of loneliness and sadness can be so prevalent and all-consuming. Althea makes a deal with the devil, so to speak, sacrificing classmates to the Vampire she finds locked in the shutters. In return, the Vampire gives her everything she's ever wanted: friends, popularity, and love. Althea must eventually reconcile her dreams to her reality before she falls too far into damnation.

A worthy read no matter your age.

Cazzy says

I've been re-reading the books in the PH series that I loved so much as a tween. My rating is in comparison to other books in the series, rather than in comparison to adult books.

This was my favourite book of the PH series as a child. As a pre teen of 11 or 12 and feeling a bit lost in the transition from junior to senior school, it was so easy to empathise with Cooney's protagonist, Althea. As an adult, I was surprised at the quality of the writing. For a PH book, it's pretty good! I found that Althea was written as so believably lost and lonely it was a little bit tragic. It was surprisingly easy to understand her motivations and sympathise with her. All the way through, I found myself simultaneously cheering her on and thinking: nooooooo - and I must be honest, I didn't really want the story to end there!

Cooney's descriptions of school life were vibrant and made me nostalgic for my own school days - both for the shy girl who felt overwhelmed and buried herself in PH books and the one that emerged (without the help of any supernatural beings) who outgrew them and into a big group of girl friends and fun.

If there were any PH books with an adult follow up (as L J Smith is planning to do), this would be the one that would get my vote. Althea going to her school reunion and a Vampire on the loose, anyone?

Melissa says

I understand wanting to try a new approach to vampire novels but this one was bad. A vampire makes a girl popular in exchange for her choosing people who he can drain. Can he not go and get his own victims? The thing that really stood out is there are no mention of parents or family. Does a high schooler really live alone in an old house and is the vampire her guardian? So many questions and no answers.

Leah says

Rating: 4 of 5

The Cheerleader was among the many *Point Horror* books I read in the early 90s, between the ages of 12 to 15. In those days, when I wasn't buried in a Stephen King novel, nine times out of ten I was reading L.J. Smith, R.L. Stine, Christopher Pike, Caroline B. Cooney, or Richie Tankersley Cusick. Their novels always thrilled and entertained, and yes, there was a healthy dose of jumps and creepies.

Nowadays, I'd recommend the *Point Horror* books for younger 12- to 15-year-olds, who want to dip their pinkie toe in the horror pool. (These books will likely fall short for anyone who's already dabbled in adult dark fiction or film.) The horror elements are mild, for the most part, and some of the teenager-y behavior may seem a little outdated. But other than that, these are great fun!

Note: My rating is based on what I remember from 20+ years ago and, of course, includes a fair share of sentimentality.

Elizabeth Nesbit-comer says

why does it always have to be the cool popular girls who meet all the vampires

Justin says

Dude, since when do vampires grant wishes, anyway? Isn't that genies or something?

Georgie says

This was a surprisingly smart instalment in the Point Horror series. Although the plot isn't scary in the same way that some of the other books in the series are, it is definitely creepy and disturbing.

Althea longs to be popular, but is barely noticed at school. She wishes she could be like Celeste, one of the most popular cheerleaders, who seems to have everything - lots of cool friends (including cute guys), the adoration of students and teachers, good grades, and lots of attention.

When Althea meets a vampire who lives in a shuttered room in her house, he offers her a bargain - if she brings him Celeste, he will give her the popularity she longs for. He isn't a bloodsucking vampire, he simply drains people's life energy, leaving them slow and exhausted, so it's not like he's going to kill Celeste. Althea agrees, despite her initial reluctance, and finally gets the life she's always wanted. But she needs to maintain her popularity, and the only way to do so is to bring the vampire new victims...

'The Cheerleader' is a 'horror' novel on the surface, but really it's about the need to belong, and the price of popularity. While several Point Horror books have characters who are either Too Stupid To Live (TSTL) or Too Bitchy To Live (TBTL), Caroline B. Cooney neatly evades these traps. Althea makes decisions of questionable morality and intelligence (i.e. making a deal with a vampire and essentially feeding him victims) but her motives for doing so are understandable, and she does increasingly question the morality of what she's doing.

Even better, Celeste is not presented as a Queen Bee Bitch type, she is actually rather likeable, and this adds another layer to the story because she doesn't deserve what happens to her, and Althea knows it.

The vampire is wonderfully frightening, evil, and gross, no sparkling and awesome hair for this guy. He is not the kind of vampire you want in your house.

I really was impressed by this one, it seems to stretch outside the typical formula for PH books. I will be looking out for more of Caroline B. Cooney's contributions to the series.
