



Unearthly

Cynthia Hand

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In the beginning, there's a boy standing in the trees...

Clara Gardner has recently learned that she's part angel. Having angel blood run through her veins not only makes her smarter, stronger, and faster than humans (a word, she realizes, that no longer applies to her), but it means she has a purpose, something she was put on this earth to do. Figuring out what that is, though, isn't easy.

Her visions of a raging forest fire and an alluring stranger lead her to a new school in a new town. When she meets Christian, who turns out to be the boy of her dreams (literally), everything seems to fall into place and out of place at the same time. Because there's another guy, Tucker, who appeals to Clara's less angelic side.

As Clara tries to find her way in a world she no longer understands, she encounters unseen dangers and choices she never thought she'd have to make between honesty and deceit, love and duty, good and evil. When the fire from her vision finally ignites, will Clara be ready to face her destiny?

Unearthly is a moving tale of love and fate, and the struggle between following the rules and following your heart.

Unearthly Details

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Author : Cynthia Hand

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From Reader Review **Unearthly** for online ebook

Wendy Darling says

4.5 out of 5 stars Finally, a well-written angel series! Clara's physical appearance, the wings, the flying, the "glory"--make angels sound impossibly beautiful. The descriptions are so well done that you can really picture and feel what it would like to be in the presence of one. The supernatural aspects are well-balanced by a solid grounding in Clara's day to day life as a teenager with excellent descriptions of school projects, relationships with her friends and her brother, and especially her conflicted relationship with her extraordinary mother.

The characters are well-developed and there's terrific courtship that is blessedly normal and crazy appealing. I appreciate the unusual choice to wait until much later in the book to get things really started on the dating front, as you've already gotten to know Clara pretty well by this point *and* it's in the right context of her life. Important and fulfilling for sure, but not the be-all and end-all of her life, as so often happens in YA books. Once it comes, however, it's very sweet and very convincing.

I did find the beginning of the book a little disjointed, and there were a few sections that could have used smoother transitions, but overall it's really terrific. It's easy to understand Clara's conflict and it's easy to like Clara, who has unearthly perfections but who is also just trying to find her way in life. An excellent start to a what should be an excellent series.

*This review also appears in *The Midnight Garden*.*

Penny says

When I saw that one of my favorite goodreaders, Tatiana, gave this book four stars I thought she'd gone insane. I mean, it's a YA book featuring angels for crying out loud! Surely it can't be good let alone worthy of four whole stars from Tatiana, so clearly she lost her mind. But I purchased the audiobook anyway because it was January 13th and I was anxiously awaiting the release of Shadowfever which was still five days away at the time. Plus it didn't hurt that this audiobook was reasonably priced.

Initially I was a little irritated with *Unearthly*. It starts out with a dream/vision that the main character has--is it just me or do too many of these books start out the exact same way? But I kept with it because I paid for it, *dangit!* Fortunately it didn't take too long for my initial irritation to wear off--I'd say no longer than the first few chapters.

For the next several chapters I didn't have much of an opinion. Not that the book was bad, because it wasn't. The writing was fine, good even, but I refused to make an official judgment call. Too many times I've fallen in love with a book only, in the end, to hate it more than poison. I wasn't going to get burned. Nope. Not me. Not again.

Now all is said and done I'm going to go ahead and say Tatiana isn't crazy. This book is good. In fact I'm going to go ahead and give this book four stars because I really like it. Though, in my heart, it will always be a five-star read because it's one of few YA paranormal romances that doesn't make me want to go on a stabbing spree. Also? *Unearthly* is the only published YA novel featuring angels that doesn't make me want

to hunt down the author so I can punch him/her in the face repeatedly.

I know the last few sentences make me seem violent beyond all reason, but believe me I have plenty of reason. Just read every other YA paranormal romance featuring angels and you'll agree. And anyway, when I say 'stabbing spree' I really mean 'write a scathing review and/or weep for all the trees destroyed in order to publish such atrocities'. And when I say: 'hunt down the author so I can punch him/her in the face'? ...well, I actually mean that*.

Moving on...

Seeing as most publishers have been saturating the market with badly written, ill-plotted out, basically retarded series about some supernatural something falling in love--twuuuuu wuvvvvv--with a vapid human I'd begun to believe there was no such thing as a good, or even great, YA paranormal romance. Especially when angels are involved. But Cynthia Hand changed my mind with her debut novel, *Unearthly*.

It's funny, but *Unearthly* doesn't contain some magical new concept or some amazing innovative plot twist that will make your head explode. It's just good. That's it. Turns out Cynthia Hand's "secret" is actually no secret at all. She employs the method of showing her audience, not telling. That's right, Cynthia Hand doesn't assume her audience is mentally-challenged. Also? Her main character, Clara Gardener, doesn't have the mental capacity of a boy-crazed, unmedicated ADHD 'tween hopped up on pixie stix. She's normal. And by normal I mean Clara's just a regular, well-adjusted, non-angry, non-emo, non-cutting teen. Although, yeah, she has angel blood pumping through her veins, but she's incredibly easy to relate to nonetheless.

What I love: Clara doesn't do what every other protagonist in this genre does: inform you she's super intelligent "'cuz she likes calculus-n-stuff", only to prove otherwise as she dithers about like a blind slack-jawed yokel the duration of the novel. She's better than that. Also? She has a healthy yet realistic relationship with her mother. They actually talk to each other and are, for the most part, honest with one another. It's quite refreshing actually.

Clara isn't the the world's only, most speshul angel-blood evuh. She's actually one of many, though at first she doesn't know of any others beside her mother and her younger brother. She also isn't super good at everything she does. Clara doesn't have every boy falling for her, at least no more then your average teenage girl. And like all teenagers she manages to make a fool of herself every once in a while. Like I said: refreshing.

What I really love (skip this if you plan on reading this book as it is *sort of* spoiler-y, albeit hardly): (view spoiler)

What I don't necessarily care for: This book contains a love triangle. Sort of. I mean it's hardly even present. And the protagonist isn't playing both guys for all they're worth. And there isn't any cheating going on, not even in Clara's heart. BUT it's still a love triangle of sorts and I'm afraid it might end badly for all involved because of various reasons I won't go into here.

That said, even if over the course of this series the triangle does play out the way I don't want it to, I think I'll be okay. Clara has free will and I am confident she will take the time to think things through rationally. She

can choose between one or the other regardless of the consequences (good and/or bad). In fact she pretty much makes her decision *in this book*.

So yeah, I recommend *Unearthly*.

*Disclaimer: I would *never* actually hunt down and assault any author. No matter how much they deserve it (Smeyer, James Frey, LAUREN KATE, Becca Fitzpatrick... I could go on). There are times in which I am sorely tempted to but I wouldn't. I'm passionate about literature but NOT insane.

Kiki says

Well, well, well. It's angels again.

Angelology is back-breaking work. I have a trunked angel work that I will one day revisit. I've worked too hard to drop it. And I mean that sincerely. I began writing it two years ago, and I am still not finished with the research. I still have stacks and stacks of angel-related references lying around, from fiction to dictionary-format archives, from endless websites to spin-off scripture, from links to Renaissance artwork to holy books. I've read both the Torah and the Bible, and I'm working on the Qur'an. I've watched movie after movie, and not enjoyed any of them. How can I, when I spend the whole two hours writing notes and spotting mythology farts?

Perhaps this sounds a huge complaint. I can assure you, it isn't. Research is endless work, but endless fun too. It's learning in its most accessible form. There's no better way to educate yourself than to study topics that fascinate and interest you. It's just good sense.

I feel some kind of spiritual connection to this Cynthia Hand. She has her research in the bag. In *Unearthly*, the mythos and the obviously meticulous research that went into it was what carried it for me. For the most part, at least.

The Black Wings, though not entirely how I have formulated them in my mind, were fascinating. Grief and sorrow are perfect emotions to pin on them, and the way they were described was brilliantly creepy. Samjeeza* was a hot-damn fallen angel, no shit or romanticization. His actions, words and appearance struck a chord with me. Basically, he was exemplary, in comparison to *Fallen*'s Daniel "The Plank" Grigori or *Hush, Hush*'s Patch "Here Boy" Cipriano.

*The only reason I'm not thrilled with him being Samjeeza (also known as Shemhazai, Semyaza or Shemyazaz, depending on the context/mythos) is because I have a weird, possessive obsession with him. Like Sammael, he's a big character of mine, and I've grown attached to him. Again, sue me. If I were less grabby and selfish, I'd say that he's the perfect pick for a fallen angel villain in a book dealing with Nephilim, being the leader of the Grigori.

Speaking of Nephilim, this is their story told RIGHT. (Again, I'm slightly biased and possessive here, only because I work with Nephilim too). Hers are impossibly beautiful, with strong ties to their angel ancestors. Remember the kids from *Torment*? Yeah, they're not like that. They actually get shit done. They also feel like supernatural beings, not just a bunch of pointless Mary-Sues.

The thing about *Unearthly*'s mythology is that the author is quiet and subtle about it. For example, flies drop down Clara's shirt. Clear satanic symbolism there, foreshadowing the Black Wings. Angela's ties to Italy. Never shoved in your face, but they're there. In many YA angel novels, it's obvious that the author is simply trying to show off about how much they know which, ironically, often ends in epic mythology farts and logic fails. Not so with *Unearthly*. It's all low-key, but quietly brilliant.

The writing was beautiful. Not consistently; the climax was a little sloppy. In one paragraph, for example, we have:

1. "I open my eyes and it takes a while for my eyes to adjust to the intense light."

Two sentences later:

2. "...the light rippling and sparkling off me like a sparkler on the Fourth of July."

Sparkling like a sparkler, eh? That's pretty darn sparkly.

For the most part, though, the writing is elegant and lovely. The romantic scenes between Clara and Tucker are beautiful, smooth and never clunky. I also LOVE the pacing. Months go by in the space of a paragraph. I like that. It's annoying when a heroine finds true love and best friends and absolution in the space of about three days. Not realistic, and just silly, basically. But no; we see almost a whole year go by throughout *Unearthly*. That's cool for me.

No, the pacing was not perfect all the time. Large chunks of the book went by, and nothing happened. It started to annoy me, really. Granted, it was all about development; Clara growing into her skin, learning to fly and piecing together the mythos, working out her purpose is (which, to my delight, reminds me of the Focus from *Final Fantasy XIII*).

Aside: The purpose is perfect. Truly. That's what YA authors miss about angels; they have a reason for living, and they're not there just to hang around and look pretty. They have a reason and a focus, and this is exactly what Cynthia gave us. Bravo, darling.

The climax...well, let's look at this from a logical perspective. Was it well-written? Yes. Not quite as flawless as the rest of the book, but I know how it is. You get all excited writing the climax, you stay up till three a.m., and you're left with tons of typos and repetition that you're way too stoked to comb. So whatever. Anyway. Was it a good, satisfying end? Absolutely. Was it fitting, did it make sense, and did it round off the book nicely? It sure did.

So what the hell is my beef?

THE POWER OF LOVE, THAT'S WHAT.

Me [to Sister]: What the fuck, man? The power of love beats the bad guy? Are you serious? "Love is the answer. LOOOVE." No. Hell to the no. I did not accept this from *Halo*, and I shall darn well wax about it in *Unearthly*.

Sister: I'm on the phone! *What the hell?*

Me: *Stomps out of room in a rage*

Sister: ...

Look, seriously. Yeah, Clara saved her mom, yadda yadda, it was all fine and good, but...REALLY? The power of love? Come on, now. This is just lame.

Clara saving Tucker did remedy this a little. I *loved* how she saved him, and not the other way round, as it always is in YA. Though the horse made me sad. It got burnded up. Poor thing.

I could go on about how awesome it is that even though Christian is a god and he's gorgeous and everything Clara doesn't fall in love with him, but then I'd be bypassing what I really want to say:

Christian is a fail.

Sorry, but he is. First of all: *Christian*? You're in an angel book, and your name is *Christian*. So. Just...ugh. How trite.

(view spoiler)

Oh, and another thing. *Kay*. Are you for real? Do we really need to keep on perpetuating the mean cheerleader wears-short-skirts-and-lip-gloss-and-flirts-audaciously-with-guys-therefore-must-be-evil stereotype? Really? Come now, Cynthia. Don't let yourself down.

At times, the plot felt nebulous. Why? The fapping over hot boys. The endless stretches of time where nothing happened. It frustrated me, and distanced me from the characters, which I normally *loved*. No one was TSTL, and though Tucker and I had our ups and downs (and ended on kind of a "we're okay" note) I thought he was a pretty decent, wholesome love interest. Clara was funny, multi-dimensional, and believable as a heroine. She and Tucker's relationship was healthy and their closeness was cute, which is a rarity in this genre, where creepy, stalky over-obsessive relationships are commonplace and it's not weird at all to watch your ~~victim~~ lover sleep. Okay, it was strange how Tucker managed to just dump Clara on her ass over the course of maybe two paragraphs, and then three days went by where Clara lay in her bed doing nothing, but this was quickly swept under the carpet and I could easily forget about any annoyance I may have had over it. All in all: the romance was nice.

On the whole? A decent read. Good fun, well-written, and brilliantly researched. Lovely characters, some good pacing, and though the climax was kind of irritating, all in all it was pretty darn enjoyable. I award it three and a half stars. I liked it, and I'll be reading the sequel for sure.

BONUS TIME!

...because Bonus Time heals all wounds.

It feels like time for a (rather enjoyable, very tame)...

Drinking Game!

Fill a cup up to the halfway with Kahlua. Every time someone pimps out their wings, pour in a ladel of hot cocoa. When you're done, stir up that bad boy, cover it with with a big squirt of whipped cream, take a gulp and enjoy not being drunk for a change.

I love you all.

Kristi says

I read this book back in October.... and I've been dying for it to be released to other people could bask in it's fabulousness!! I have to say that in the midst of all the 'angel' themed book hitting the YA market right now. This one is my favorite! (of the ones I've read so far....)

Let's talk about how wonderful this book is, shall we?

I was so glad that Clara knew she was angel. This isn't a story of a girl discovering an she's part angel... even though I initially thought it was because the synopsis I read said "When Clara Gardner leans she's part angel...." at least the one above says she "recently learned"... but I think both of them are a little misleading. Yes, she's recently discovered she's an angel, but I think the novel is about much more than that. I mean you could totally take out the angel part and it could easily be a novel about a girl choosing between her heart and her duty. Except the angel aspect makes it so much more awesome!

Hand's writing is so very easy to read, it seemed like I had just turned a few pages, when actually I was a few hundred pages in. And if her descriptions of Wyoming do not make you want to pack a bag and jet-set to this beautiful area, I think you might be a little bit crazy.

Clara is a character you are going to like. Despite her angel-i-ness she is very much a normal teen girl. Insecure, smart.... she underestimates herself, but I think that is what made me like her. She's the type of character that you'd want to be friends with. And the boys. I can't fail to mention the boys. Totally DID NOT see some of that coming, I don't really want to give to much away... but whew. Watching the relationships develop between Clara and Tucker and Christian was probably my favorite part of the novel, especially the slow, sweet relationship between Tucker and Clara. Awwww. I probably shouldn't have said that! These boys couldn't be more different..... and I'm very interested to see how it's going to play out with all the developments at the end.

Speaking of developments at the end.... there are quite a few. There is some resolution, but we also get an open can of worms.... a big can. There is definitely more to this angel business than what Clara is privy to, and I'm interested in finding out what exactly it is.

Unearthly is a perfect blend of realism with a supernatural twist, not to mention a unpredictable plot line and

a beautiful love story. Everything that I want in a story and more. Can't wait to be captivated by the rest of this series.

Steph Sinclair says

It's been a few months since I finished this book and I'm still swooning. You shall be read again soon my preciousssssss...

Actual rating: Teetering on 4.5 stars

Hush, Hush, who? *Halo*, what? *Fallen*, huh?

After reading the catastrophe *Hush, Hush*, I had pretty much given up on reading any more books involving angels. As far as I was concerned it would be my first and last angel book. I resisted the urge (mostly thanks to my dear Goodreads friend's reviews) to pick up *Halo* and *Fallen*, even though they still remain on my TBR shelf. At first glance I thought, "435 pages?! This means 435 pages of misery or 435 pages of awesomeness." Needless to say, I was not very optimistic about this book, demoting it all the way to the bottom of the library book pile. But, I decided to give it a chance. And I can honestly say I'm glad I did. *Unearthly* will make you forget all about those sad, pathetic excuses for a book about angels. *Unearthly* is the real deal.

Unearthly tells the story of a 16 year-old girl, Clara, who is 1/4 part angel-blood. The book opens with her discovering her purpose in life. It appears she is destined to save a young boy from a forest fire. So, together with her mother and brother, Jeffery, they pack up their house and home and move from California to Wyoming.

At first glance, you think you have this book figured out. You're thinking, "Ok, I know what's going to happen. She is going to save this dude and they are going to fall in love, yada, yada, yada." And just when you're feeling really clever for single-handedly predicting the outcome of the book, Cynthia Hand shatters your preconceptions. I love a good plot twist and this book exceeded my expectations.

A few things I LOVED about *Unearthly*:

1. No disappearing parent syndrome. Clara's mother was very much apart of her life. Albeit mysteriously, she is always there to help Clara with succeeding in fulfilling her purpose.
2. Likeable heroine. Not once did I feel irritated at Clara for doing something dumb. She isn't overly whinny or a pathetic damsel.
3. Healthy relationships. You will not find insta-love in this book! No, sir! In fact, I would say Hand may have written one of the best developing relationships I've read in a long time. She let it build up perfectly. By the time our heroine actually falls in love it is believable. As a result, it is much easier to feel Clara's emotions. I could feel myself swooning! Clara isn't overly dependent on her love interest, either. She learns to draw on her own inner strength. Kudoos to Hand for handing this very well.

If there is one complaint I have, it's that I didn't really like how it ended. It felt awkward to me, like it was incomplete. There are so many unanswered questions left in the ending that it almost drove me insane! And to top it off, the next book doesn't come out till next freakin' year!

Anywho....

In conclusion, it pains me to think this book will be compared to *Halo*, *Fallen* and *Hush, Hush*. It's in a higher and better league than them, hands down. So, I've decided to do my own little comparison through a visual story. Enjoy!

Once upon a time there was a girl who loved life. Everything was wonderful!

Until one fateful day she picked up

and it left her in a state of

After finishing *CoFA*, she sank further into depression. The girl felt no one could understand the mental pain she felt.

Then, one day she came across *Unearthly* and she saw the heavens open with rays of light.

The girl was once again happy.

The end!

Ironically, if you google "Angel saving human" this pops up as an image:

Coincidence? I'll leave that up to you.

My *Hallowed* review can be found [here](#).

More reviews and more at [Cuddlebuggery Book Blog](#).

Keertana says

Rating: 2.5 Stars

I just want to let you all know that while I'm writing this, I am also building a fort. Yes, a fort to protect me from all the boulders and bombs that will most likely be thrown my way for *highly* disliking this novel. It doesn't matter that my fort is made of pillows or that it contains highly flammable books inside it - the point is, I have a fort. Thus, I hope you won't attack me since...well...I have a fort!

Part 1: In Which I "Get It"

I get it. I seriously do. I *get* why there is so much hype surrounding this novel. I *get* why you all love it. I really do. *Unearthly* released during a time when angel novels such as *Hush, Hush, Hades*, and *Fallen* were making waves - not all good - in the book community. Thus, in comparison with those novels, *Unearthly* is truly a masterpiece. But, in my opinion, it's a masterpiece in the same way that *Twilight* is a masterpiece when compared to *Fifty Shades of Grey* or *Beautiful Disaster*. It's much better than the norm, but it isn't *that* good at the same time.

More about that later - back to why I "get it." First and foremost, *Unearthly* provides a new and unique take on angel lore. Not only is it a story that *doesn't* feature a teenage girl falling in love with a fallen angel, it is also a story that *doesn't* feature insta-love or a *true* love triangle. Yippee! Clara, the protagonist of our story, is one-fourth of an angel herself. In Hand's novel, angels are given a divine purpose in life that they must fulfill. As they grow into teenagers, they begin to get glimpses or visions of their purpose and must accordingly go about completing them. Thus, when Clara is given a vision of saving a handsome teenage boy from a fire, she and her family take off from California to Wyoming where she meets Christian, the boy of her dreams (literally!).

Now, let me discuss the reasons why this novel really is quite good. First and foremost, I loved Clara's relationship with her mother, who is a half-angel. While I found it to be a little too perfect at some points, it was still nice to see her mother be such an active part of her life. Furthermore, I found that Clara's apprehensions about moving, her difficulty fitting into the social scheme at her new school, and her confusion over whether or not she is meant to get closer to Christian all handled quite realistically. In addition to Christian though, we have Tucker Avery - the annoying twin brother of Clara's best friend, Wendy. Tucker and Clara's relationship took a forefront in the second-half of the novel and I enjoyed how it was never rushed and it grew through conversation and the two spending time with each other.

So, really, there's a lot to love about this book: (1) Original/Unique/New take on angel lore (2) No Missing Parent Syndrome (3) Quite realistic emotions (4) One heart-warming romance that grows through conversation. So, you might ask, what went wrong?

Part 2: In Which I Don't Fall for the Hype

You see, despite having some excellent and interesting points, *Unearthly* was actually a massive disappointment. I believe that this is primarily due to the order in which I read my angel books --> (1) *Hush, Hush* (2) *Daughter of Smoke and Bone* (3) *Angelfall* (4) *Shadows* (5) *Unearthly* <-- Do you see a problem here? No? Well, let me tell you. I read this novel *after* reading *Angelfall* and *Daughter of Smoke and*

Bone, two of the best angel novels written. Thus, I *didn't* have massively low expectations for my next angel novel. Combined with the glowing ratings and hype surrounding this story, I was really expecting something great. I feel as if whenever I go into a story expecting to hate it, I love it, and whenever I go into a novel expecting to love it, I usually hate it. I had a similar experience with this one.

While *Unearthly* had an original premises which I found fascinating, it was *extremely* boring for more than half the story. It was like any other contemporary romance with Clara attending high school, fainting when she saw Mr. I-am-SO-hot-Christian, and attempting to get closer to him because she felt a romantic *spark* between them. Yeah, nothing unique there, huh? I liked how Clara began to learn more about her angel abilities with her angel-blood friend, Angela, but either than that, everything about this story was *so* typical.

Speaking of Clara, her character simply grated on me. I think this might simply be an issue of personal preference, but Clara was *perfect*. As in, she is an angel therefore she is *literally* perfect. Clara was beautiful. Clara had gorgeous hair. Clara could do any sport effortlessly. Clara could charm any guy she wanted. Clara could speak any language she wanted. Clara could do this perfectly. Clara could do that perfectly. Clara was a freaking perfect angel! I get it - I *know* she's an angel - but it was *so* silly. *Why* did Clara need to be perfect? I love flawed characters and while Clara was flawed in the sense that she *did* rebel against the laws of her angelic society and she found *some* things hard, for the most part, I was just annoyed with her. Furthermore, I couldn't connect with her in the least. Clara, you have a problem? Well, guess what? Us, humans? We *always* have problems, so suck it up! It seems harsh, but I was *extremely* irritated by this quality of hers. I think it became less problematic as the novel progressed, but it was glaringly obvious – and casted Clara into a petulant light actually – for the first half of the story.

Once the half-way mark of this novel was passed, it began to pick up a little. I liked how Clara refused to be one of those girls who chased after a guy and her developing relationship with Tucker was sweet. I *loved* Tucker Avery - he is *everything* you want a guy to be. In fact, I found him to be a little *too* perfect actually which annoyed me ever-so-slightly. If you liked Zeke from *The Immortal Rules*, you'll probably adore Tucker. Yet, while I hated Zeke, I did manage to like Tucker, despite his perfection. While I found his reaction to Clara's angel background and his acceptance of certain actions they were forced to take during their relationship *very* unrealistic and too convenient, it was still bearable. Yet, I was rolling my eyes the moment the word *love* popped into the picture. Yes, Clara and Tucker *did* like each other, but love? Puh-lease, give me a break! Furthermore, Clara still felt *drawn* to Christian which was simply irritating. I know she chose one of the guys, but it felt as if the plot *still* had love-triangle potential, which made me want to run away screaming.

While Tucker is a complete gentleman, Christian is a total jerk. Yes, I mean it, a JERK. While he did perform a rather inexcusable act on the night of prom, it was even worse before that night when he refused to be seen in Clara's presence around his friends. I *hate* guys like that and Christian, no matter how HOT he may have been, was no exception. Furthermore, I found the fact that Clara was so obsessed him to be rather startling and *boring*. I didn't *care* about Christian. I didn't understand how dating Christian was going to help her solve her purpose. I didn't even understand why her mother was being such a stickler about her dating anyone *but* Christian. Somehow, I never *felt* the seriousness of this whole *purpose*. Yes, I got that it was Clara's fate or destiny, but that actual sense of urgency that should have sent my heart rate up and made me sit on the edge of my seat with panic and worry? Uh...yeah, that was missing. *Majorly*.

While *Unearthly* began to wind down, we had an extra sub-plot of a fallen angel thrown in. Notice the key word: sub-plot. As in, not the main focus. In fact, it was *so* minuscule that I'm confused as to what role it even played in the plot of this story. In addition, the ending of this novel was nowhere near as shocking as

other readers had extolled. It was *not* such a major plot twist and I, for one, was unimpressed by it. If anything, I'm annoyed with the ending of *Unearthly*. It leaves a *lot* of loose threads hanging, makes the reader question what exactly even happened during those last *thirty-five pages of action*, and wonder whether picking up the sequel is even worth it. Yes, that's right. 35/435 Pages of this novel were action. What were the other 400 Pages devoted to? High School. Prom. Romance. Flying. Teen Angst. Jerks. Just your usual, run-of-the-mill, dramatic teenage novel.

In conclusion, while there *is* a lot to love about this book, its execution falls flat. Its characters are *way* too perfect, its romance is both convenient and *not* love even though it claims it is, the action its premises promises is minuscule, it throws in random sub-plots that only serve to make the reader confused and *need* to pick up the sequel in annoyance, and the few characters who are *not* perfect are simply annoying, irritating, or serve no purpose to the story. I like the idea of *Unearthly* and I like its writing and even the outline of its characters, but when you dig deeper and really analyze this novel, it's nothing much but a standard Young Adult Paranormal Romance paraded around under a cover of hype, false originality, and very little true action to compensate for its flaws.

Now, the million dollar question is... will I read the sequel? I think... no. While it probably will be a quick read, much like *Unearthly* was for me, I don't think I'm up for another dose of this world. I simply don't care for the characters enough and while some readers claim the sequel is better, most lowered their ratings ever-so-slightly, which means *I* will probably wind up giving *Hallowed* One Star. I think I'd rather just avoid writing *that* snarky review, thank you very much. Would I recommend *Unearthly*? If you haven't read *Angelfall* or *Daughter of Smoke and Bone* then yes, I would. For you, it'll be a unique and utterly compelling read. I, however, was disappointed and extremely unimpressed by this one. With that, I am off to hide under my impenetrable fort - let the boulder-throwing begin!

You can read this review and more on my blog, Ivy Book Bindings.

Elle says

I feel it only fair to warn you guys that I am involved in a one-sided fictional relationship with Cynthia Hand. In which we spend our evenings sipping martinis and laughing hysterically at the craptasticness of all the recent angel novels, while Jericho Barrons kneels at my side sporting a Galactica flight suit and feeding me chocolate-dipped cherries.

(Apparently, my fantasies have a knack for getting out of control at times. Just roll with it).

Anyhoodle, *Unearthly* is a delicious cheese-filled Happy Meal remaining afloat in a sea of unwashed goat carcasses, (Fallen, Hush, Hush... the list is long), and it is for this reason that the general GoodReads population (myself included) is praising its very existence.

Sure, there are far *better* YA novels. But what makes it unique is the WTF curve-ball she hurls at you at the end.

Oh ya'ess she did.

Having said that, give me a month or two and I will probably forget it was ever written. And I will choose a new author with whom to share my fangirl daydreams.

...and Cynthia Hand can get back to drinking the blood of virgins from the hoof of a Pterodactyl. Or whatever the hell she does to keep ahead of her game.

Krystle says

I've been burned so many times by angel books; Hush, Hush, Fallen, Angelfire, and what have you, so I was quite set to hate this book. I thought, "let's just give it a chapter" and then what do you know. That one chapter turned into five and then ten and all of a sudden I just could not stop reading. I *had* to know what happened next and my god the amount of times I screamed at the book for the girl to HOOK UP WITH THE GUY was so mind boggling. I could not put this book down. It had an uber strong addictive enchantment over me that couldn't be broken.

If you were looking for some quality book with angels in it, I think you might have just found it.

I can't tell you how much I loved this book. Clara is awesome. She already knows she's part angel in this book so there's no slow burn of her finding out her deep dark origins which would normally already be obvious from the beginning. Yes, it's explained how she actually found out because, you know, having a back story is always important. I love that while she's blessed with good looks, an ability to do things just right, and what have you she's not perfect. She has to learn how to use her growing powers and *develop* in to them. And this is not an overnight fix either. She has to work for it throughout the book. And surprising as it may be, she's not entirely perfect. And she's not a walking angst-fest either. Confused, cautious, and perhaps distant for her own good, yes, but not a sullen I-want-to-slap-you-so-hard because you won't wake up type of girl.

The romance. My goodness. I can't tell you how much I was so emotionally invested in it. I have never cheered so hard for a romantic pairing in my life. I was literally raving the whole time with "What are you doing? Go with HIM! HIMMMMM!!!!" And when you read the premise for this book it TOTALLY leads you in the wrong direction and I am so glad it went the way it did in the book. He's a sweet, down to earth guy, and he called her "carrots"! If you don't love him after that whole Gilbert Blythe-vibe there is something wrong! The love triangle was kind of... different to say the least. It's not something you're expecting and it's not this swinging back and forth deal. The whole romance was DEFINITELY one-sided and you like both guys but well, the other guy is just much better. Sorry. Haha.

I love how her friends were portrayed. They weren't just props for the main girl. They both had their own sort of subplot going on and I loved to see that they weren't just goodie cardboard cutouts that supported Clara in everything or were just there to force her to hook up with some guy. They all had independent goals that they strove for and weren't stupid dunderheads that served no purpose than to provide comic relief. All of her friends had life and contributed something to the pages. There was one moment when I wanted to smack one of them for giving her poor advice but I don't care, it ended the way I wanted it to anyway.

Unearthly is fabulous. There's lots of tension, a real plot that carries throughout the book, an AWESOME romance that isn't overly done, and has you CRAVING, just CRAVVVVVVING for the sequel. I have to get me a finished copy of this book.

In a word? AWESOME. Get this book now.

Navessa says

I did a bad thing. I ruined breakfast. The waffle and the sausage may never forgive me.

For those of you who are wondering "What the fuck? Has she finally lost it?" the answer is 'no'. You see, I was supposed to buddy read this with Rose and Ellis in October but after reading a book that left me questioning my faith in humanity I decided to pick this up and just skim the first chapter, you know, "Just the tip, just for a second, just to see how it feels". We all know how that goes. Eight hours later it was two a.m. and I'd finished it.

So ladies, I'm sorry. I've been wanting to tell you for a week but as I'm a coward I waited until the day I'm leaving for vacation so I wouldn't have to deal with any potential fallout.

Emily May says

I always feel a little bad when I disagree with the majority about a book, like there must be something I'm missing or I obviously didn't 'get' it. I do understand why a lot of people enjoyed *Unearthly* and there were parts I liked too... but I still wasn't blown away. As far as young adult stories about angels go, this is probably one of the best - only, that's not really saying much. I found the book okay in many ways, I don't have a huge rant to make about girls who are obsessed with boys over everything else, or just plain annoying... but the most dominant emotion I felt through a lot of this novel was boredom.

It seems that my expectations are always going to be ripped apart and tossed aside. If I'd opened this book expecting to hate it, I'd probably have written a 5-star dazzling review. As it happens, I was hyped up on all the rave reviews, even from some of my hardest-to-please friends and I kept reading on and on and waiting for the plot or characters to grab me so I'd think "yes, I definitely see why everyone loves this!" but it never happened that way. It starts with a mysterious vision that sounded potentially very interesting, which then leads our protagonist (Clara) and her family to Wyoming in order to follow the call of her angelic purpose (she's part angel). From there the story simply seems to spiral off into another high school drama. Clara's angelic purpose all centres around the hottest and most popular boy in school and she then, of course, becomes immediate enemies with his equally gorgeous and popular girlfriend. Then we get to an array of proms, boy troubles, class projects and finally the realisation that maybe mr popular-angelic-purpose is not the one Clara truly wants to be with.

It was all fine, I just never got a sense of "wow" or any particular need to stalk Amazon until *Hallowed* comes out. I wanted very much to like it, I don't know if my expectations were too high but I obviously missed what makes this book so special. That's why I'd still recommend this book to anyone who loves a bit of young adult paranormalness (not a word??) because I'm fairly sure that the problem was my own. Everyone I've talked to loved this book and I'm not entirely sure why I just couldn't get into it. The characters

were varied and interesting, there were some parts I found quite funny, it just... I don't know. The best thing I can tell you in this review is to read it for yourself.

Jennifer Armentrout says

Sigh. I like Tucker and his cowboy hat. Having images of Kevin Bacon in his Footloose days for some reason while reading this.

P says

“I'm looking at you. Why are you always trying to hide how pretty you are?”

I've been thinking about my rating of this book for two hours, and it's precariously between 1 and 2 stars since the moment I finished it. I know you're wanting to beat the crap out of me right now for giving this book just two stars. How dare I ? Please, just let me explain, and if you're not satisfied with the answers after that, you can slap my face as hard as you want. I'll let you.

“Hey, Carrots,” he says.”

Unearthly is not an awful book by all means. The book starts off with a great premise and a strong lead female character. Although I didn't like Clara, for her voice being flat and quite boring when she tries to narrate her own story in each chapter. She's just rambling and going on and on with her routine, which I didn't want to know. I wanted to tell her to shut the f*ck up and rearrange her thought when her story started spinning out of its way.

“I think he seriously believes that deflowering an angel could mean an eternity in fiery hell.”

The setting of *Unearthly* is weak, in my opinion, and I didn't blame the author for this. I blamed myself because I couldn't get into the story and the world-building that was easily to fall in love with. I just couldn't feel that connection to the characters and the story through this book. I'm so sorry. Still I don't know about this world where angels exist and the fine line between Black and White. I nodded and nodded through the book, but I didn't even know how it could be like that.

The first 80% should have been substituted with the last few chapters of this book. The whole story is wrapped up after excruciate pain I have endured, it kept pushing me away from liking the book wholeheartedly. The harder I tried, the more it kicked me in my butt.

This was my expectation before I read *Unearthly*

And this is what I get from it

I keep wondering I read the same book that everyone liked so much and why I felt absolutely nothing for the ending that were supposed to be mind-blowing and another cliffhanger of my life. Now I'm unsure whether I should read the next one or not for what pains me seriously in this book, I think I can't do it again.

“So often we only do what we think is expected of us, when we are capable of so much more.”

Tucker is my ship, and I think I chose right, didn't I ? Lol. Christian felt weird for me, his feeling towards Clara wasn't exploding and sounded strange even when the truth of his was revealed. I was shocked as much as Kristen Stewart when she found out Edward was a vampire.

<https://goo.gl/TvjfhG>

Mizuki says

Unearthly by Cynthia Hand, is one of the most cliched, over-ranted YA books I'd ever read. No kidding.

There're a lot of five stars reviews for *Unearthly*, first book of Miss Hand's paranormal series about...surprise, surprise: angels and angel-bloods. (hybrid between humans and angels/Nephilim) There are also handful of famous YA novelists e.g. Richelle Mead and Melissa Marr giving their recommendations, that sounds promising isn't it? Even the cover artwork looks kind of good! But *Unearthly* had turned out to

be so plain, so uneventful and so very...boring that left me utterly underwhelmed after I finished reading it.

I want to like this book, trust me I really do. Miss Hand's writing is quite good, I also like how she described the Northern American countryside scenery, but the plot, characters, romance and angel mythology she had created are so very flat and poorly constructed that I'm very disappointed.

Clara is our heroine and the whole book is narrated with her first-person POV without any break, which means we get to hear her thoughts and see things through her eyes ALWAYS but oh boy, Clara's voice is so uninteresting, she barely shows curiosity about her part-angel's blonde hair and the supernatural abilities it entailed. All-in-all, she barely has any thought about what it means to be an angel-blood and her 'purpose'. Miss Hand simply tells us Clara's mother told her she is an angel-blood and there's a 'purpose' she needs to fulfill and that's it. Clara just sucks it up with hardly any second thought and question, she never pauses and digests the idea of being an angel-blood and what it really means. Maybe it's just me, but I found a heroine so lacking in curiosity, who is so readily accepting her identity as a part-angel to be very uninteresting and unrealistic.

There're a handful of YA novels about angels/part-angels/fallen angels, but so far hardly any of them manage to make the concept of angels look so boring like *Unearthly* does. I found the way which Miss Hand handled and reveled the concept of angels in her book to be counter-productive, stripping almost all of the aspects that makes angels interesting/mysterious/otherworldly/special. So the angel-bloods have wings, they are beautiful to look at and can do things better than the humble little humans, but so what? I can't see them as being deserved the title of 'angel' at all! Simply put, Miss Hand offers us nothing new nor unique about angels.

(A special thank to Jun Bisque, who made this jpg for me!)

Instead Clara's thoughts and concern are filled mostly by school-related affairs, hanging out with schoolmates and about boys. Therefore I found myself reading a book mostly about the overused 'new girl in a new school and how she gets around things AND ALSO how she gets two hot boys interested in her' trapping, with barely any supernatural happening in sight, although a supernatural YA novel was what I thought I'd signed up for when I picked up *Unearthly* in the library.

Miss Hand also offered me hardly anything to root for Clara, after reading a book of 435 pages I still know so little about her as a character. I only know Clara is kind and she has a sense of duty, she likes ballet and she is good at EVERYTHING she does because she is an angel-blood, she is beautiful AGAIN because she is an angel-blood even though she has no self-confidence about her own appearance and has to be told she's perfect by a boy who adored the ground she steps on. *sighs* I'm surprised that no one had pointed out how big a Mary Sue she is.

Okay, maybe Clara isn't as bad as some other Mary Sues in other YA novels about angels, e.g. Luce Price from the *Fallen* series and Nora Grey from the *Hush, Hush* series. But oh goodness, I wish Miss Hand can write a heroine who has more personality and likable quality than Clara nonetheless.

As to the Love Interests, I found Love Interest no.1 Christian to be an understandable character, he's being painted as The Picture-Perfect Prince Charming but I at least can see the likable qualities in him and why people like him. On the other hand, I found Clara's romance with Love Interest no. 2 Tucker to be a forced and unconvincing one. At the beginning Tucker is being a jerk to Clara and guess what? He's being a jerk and calling her names because he is secretly in love with her!!! God help me! Is that guy an 8 years old or

something? Later Miss Hand seems to try damage-control the Tucker-thing by painting him as the nice, attractive, thoughtful guy but oh boy, the damage is already done.

Again the whole Clara-and-Tucker's-romance is filled with a lot of "Tell, Not Show"; the author seems to want making the romance a slowly developed affair instead of some foolish love-at-first-sight thingy. Although I can accept Clara slowly learns to love Tucker but oh my goodness, I don't enjoy being told all of a sudden, Tucker is Clara's ONE TRUE LOVE and stuff. It's too sudden, too unconvincing.

Clara's mother plays an important part in the story because she's supposed to be Clara's loving mother and the one who enlightens her daughter about her angel-blood's legacy, but oh boy this woman had done such a poor job on it! She refuses to tell her daughter anything of importance--so Clara, a newbie angel-blood isn't supposed to learn there're women-raping evil fallen angels/The Black Wings out there, and has to be informed about this fact by her fellow part-angel friend!? What kind of mother is that?

As to the evil Black Wings in question, we only see a single one of them in *Unearthly*. But oh goodness, the existence of the Black Wings is only barely mentioned in the book and there's no foreshadowing of the threat. And when a Black Wing actually shows up at the ending part, he looks like a plot-device which Miss Hand called up in the last minute for the sake of creating threat and tension other than a worthy, well-built villain. What a let down!

I had mentioned that Miss Hand's writing is good, but sadly her tone is flat, lacking in suspense and tension. Most of the book reads like a diary of an ordinary *human* teenage girl going about her daily life instead of revealing a tale about a part-angel young girl who is coming to term with her true identity and trying to fulfill an important, matter-of-life-and-death mission for the sake of Greater Good. Nope.

Still, I'm going to read the sequel, so I'll have to wish myself good luck.

Review for book 2: <https://www.goodreads.com/review/show...>

Vinaya says

Is this a revolutionary, earth-shattering book that will change the face of YA fantasy? No. Is this a book that will forever change the way people look at angels? No. Is this a riveting, un-put-downable read that will make it to the top of the bestseller lists? No. Should people read this book? Absolutely. Now, I know you're thinking I'm bonkers, but let me tell you why '*Unearthly*', despite its girl-next-door appearance, should be winning Miss America.

But before I begin, may I just say how strongly I feel that whoever wrote the blurb for this book ought to be fired. And when s/he's walking out of the building, throw a ten-ton stone from the twelfth floor on his/her head. Seriously. Read this blurb.

Clara Gardner has recently learned that she's part angel. Having angel blood run through her veins not only makes her smarter, stronger, and faster than humans (a word, she realizes, that no longer applies to her), but it means she has a purpose, something she was put on this earth to do. Figuring out what that is, though, isn't easy.

Her visions of a raging forest fire and an alluring stranger lead her to a new school in a new town. When she

meets Christian, who turns out to be the boy of her dreams (literally), everything seems to fall into place—and out of place at the same time. Because there's another guy, Tucker, who appeals to Clara's less angelic side.

As Clara tries to find her way in a world she no longer understands, she encounters unseen dangers and choices she never thought she'd have to make—between honesty and deceit, love and duty, good and evil. When the fire from her vision finally ignites, will Clara be ready to face her destiny?

Unearthly is a moving tale of love and fate, and the struggle between following the rules and following your heart.

Now, if you're like me, and have read too many terrible YA PNRs to count, this blurb pretty much represents your worst nightmare. It's got all the ingredients necessary for a horrible cliched story that reminds you of every other story of this sort you have ever read. Love triangle, check. Boy of your dreams (literally!), check. Small town school with dark mysterious beings in the woods, check. And so on. So you read the blurb, and you shudder at the prospect of reading this book, and you move on (like I did). Then someone whose taste you trust writes a review and says, this is a fabulous book, you should read it. And you read it, and like it, and then you get to the point I started out from, which is, the death of the blurb-writer.

Unearthly is a book that is absolutely worth reading. When I first started it, I was like, why are people recommending this book to me?! There were prophetic dreams of hot boys and now Clara (what a horrible name, btw) was moving across the country to get to said hot boy. Obviously she was going to meet him, and he was going to fall for her super-specialness, that he managed to divine by glancing at her boobs and she was going to fall for his pretty face, since fate had decreed it so. Welcome to the Twilight Zone (pun intended). But I was SO wrong. Cynthia Hand twists her story very, very cleverly. SO much so that you're feeling all smug and superior for more than half of the book because all your expectations of shitty YA fantasy have come true. And then, halfway through, all your expectations are shattered and you're no longer reading about some stereotypical names-on-a-page, They have actually become real people with real problems, and everyday emotions.

So Clara ends up falling not for some guy she's only seen in her dreams, but for an actual person with whom she has spent time, someone with flaws, someone who gets her, and whom she gets. And more importantly, once they have fallen in love, it is not all smooth sailing. It's not like "Oh, you're angel, that's great, I have no issues with the fact that you start going out with me without giving me some pertinent details about your life." Because, you know, real people aren't really like that. If you lie to them, they get angry, and they want you to go away. (Becca Fitzpatrick, take note!)

I also like that all the other female characters in this book aren't bitchy wanna-bes who pale in comparison to the heroine. Even Dream Boy's bitchy-seeming girlfriend has a core of humanity; Clara's best friend is not some milk-and-water miss but a dark girl with bite and an actual personality. Clara's mom is a little annoying, but Hand does a good job with making her convincingly secretive. Clara has a believable love-hate relationship with her brother.

There are a lot of open-ended plotlines in the book that I am looking forward to exploring in the next book. I actually *like* Clara and Christian and Tucker, none of whom are too good to be true, and I'm looking forward to seeing what their story is going to be. Unearthly does a great job stirring up interest for the series, and it is a relief to read about teens with healthy relationships who can be counted on to behave like normal people. Glory be !

Flannery says

Thanks for the push, Jess! Tetons and Yellowstone, cowboys, log houses, swimming in rivers, boy/girl twins! NOMNOMNOM. I didn't even give a crap that this book is about angels. I loved it:)

Tatiana says

Honestly, after reading at least one of the following books - Hush, Hush, Halo, Fallen - do you really believe there is a good paranormal YA romance about angels out there? A book about proms, love triangles, hawt boys, that doesn't make you want to hurl? No? Neither did I before reading *Unearthly*.

I was very much impressed by this novel. I was cautious and not trusting of positive reviews of it, and it ended up exceeding my expectations. The book never even once made me roll my eyes - something that I always expect to do when I open any teen romance. It is not driven by the main character's stupidity, like many paranormal romances are. It is not focused on some girl's obsession over a guy who treats her like crap. It is pretty much a breath of fresh air.

Clara is an angel-blood (1/4th angel, 3/4th human). She just received her purpose - a task that all angel-bloods have to fulfill in their lives. This purpose has something to do with a boy Clara sees in her visions and she thinks it is her duty to save his life. She moves closer to him, tries to get to know him and has a bit of a crush on him. Only it seems her purpose in regards to Christian is not quite clear and neither are her feelings towards him.

Apparently, it is possible to write a paranormal romance which employs all standard elements of the genre, and make something good out of it. Cynthia Hand proves with this novel that you can write a teen girl with supernatural abilities and not make her a complete Mary Sue. That there can be a romance between a supernatural and a human, and neither is obsessed with another and ready to die of despair if they break up. That nobody in the relationship has to be a stalker or a doormat. That teens can fall in love with each other not because one of them is inhumanly hawt or sparkly, but because, you know, they spend time together and TALK first.

The story is well paced and never gets boring. The mystery of Clara's purpose is sufficiently mysterious and creates a nice tension. The romantic story line is sweet and, oh my, **HEALTHY!** Can you believe it?

The angel mythology unfolds at a good pace as well. Whenever you write something about angels, there is always this question of God, how to place him in the story. Hand does a great job of not mucking the concept of angel by making angels in her novel some sexy beasts who are allowed to do whatever and still remain angels. And God's place in the story is also carefully written, avoiding being preachy (for non-believers) or blasphemous (for those who believe).

Unearthly might not be one of the books that I recommend to anyone who would listen (like I do with Lips Touch: Three Times or Melina Marchetta's novels) and that I am in awe of. But I can guarantee you will at

least not want to bang this book against the wall. It is not morally reprehensible, misguided or poorly written. As far as teen paranormal romance fluff goes, *Unearthly* belongs in the top tier IMO. I am even impressed enough to read the sequel, many plot lines remain open and I am curious!

Cynthia Hand says

Got to rate a 5 for my own book!

Brigid ☆ Cool Ninja Sharpshooter ☆ says

This review is also featured on Tasty Books!

A typical conversation I have with my friends/family:

Me (Reading something): UGH I HATE THIS SHIT SO MUCH.

Friend/Family member: Then why don't you stop reading it?

Me: Because ... what if it spontaneously becomes awesome or something? I know, it never really happens, but WHAT IF.

And it's true. It hardly happens. It's very rare that I start off hating a book, and then end up really liking it. I can only think of a handful of times it has happened. ... Well, *Unearthly* was one of those rare books.

I did not really expect to like this book. I probably wouldn't have picked it up, except I couldn't find much at the library that I wanted to read—plus, I had seen some glowing reviews of it. So I said to myself, Ah what the heck. It's summer. I can stand to read something fluffy, even if it isn't that good.

When I opened this book, I quickly realized it was a book about angels. And that made me nervous. Most YA books I've read about angels have been train wrecks—*Hush, Hush*, *Fallen*, *Halo* ... You get the idea. Not only that, but the front page had a blurb from Alexandra Adornetto herself.

So I'm like:

Oh God, what have I gotten myself into this time?

And as I started this book, I strongly disliked it. The beginning was very rough for me, which is part of why I knocked off a star. It really felt like the beginning to every other paranormal romance out there:

- Protagonist (Clara) is supernatural—part angel, to be specific.
- She has a prophetic dream about a hawt guy in a burning forest. Oh noez! She decides it is her destiny to save him (because the idea is that every angel has a special "purpose" that they have to carry out).
- Clara and her family totally abandon their home and move to where this hawt guy (Christian) is, so that Clara can save him when the time comes. (Clara figured out where he lived based on the license plate on a car she sees in the recurring vision of him.)

So, seems like a really clichéd and predictable beginning. I'm like, *Oh boy. Now I guess Clara is going to start stalking Christian and obsessing over him (and/or vice versa). And then she'll save him from a fire, and they're going to fall in insta-love and be making out with each other every five seconds. And I'll be like:*

Not to mention, Clara was a total pain in the ass for the first fourth of the book or so. I mean, she was just such an asshole. See my first few statuses, and you can see how I felt about her. She spent a lot of time talking about how she was naturally beautiful due to her angel blood—and then she kept criticizing other girls' looks. For example:

"They seem friendly enough. Definitely not pretty people, all wearing T-shirts and jeans, braids and ponytails, not a lot of makeup. But nice. Normal."

At first I felt like:

I really did not like her. I thought she was another Mary-Sue-ish bitchface.

Yet, somehow about halfway through this book I found myself like this:

So, now you're probably wondering why I liked this book so much. And, well, I'm still trying to put my thoughts together and explain.

Basically—yes, this book has the setup of pretty much every other paranormal romance out there. But instead of making it crappy and predictable, Cynthia Hand actually *made it work*. Not only that, but the book actually had twists *I did not expect at all*.

WHAT'S THIS? A PARANORMAL ROMANCE THAT'S NOT UTTERLY PREDICTABLE?

You're probably thinking:

But, it's true. Here, lemme explain why this book was actually pretty great.

Clara is not a whiney, boy-obsessed idiot.

She may have started off annoying, but by the end of the book I respected Clara. I'm still not crazy about her, but she had some admirable traits. As I said, I expected her to become entirely infatuated with Christian, and talk and think about nothing but him, and cry over him constantly, etc. But no! Clara actually spent time with friends like a normal teenager—instead of spending all her time stalking a boy (or being stalked by a boy). And her friends were not just cardboard dummies, either. (Well, Wendy kind of was. But Angela ... I loved Angela. She was supa cool.)

But what was most important was, Clara realized that she had to fulfill her "purpose" no matter what, and

that was her main focus. She realized that, even if Christian did not like her in a romantic way, it was still her duty to save his ass from that fire—and she was going to do it, dammit. And she didn't just sit around waiting for it to happen, either. She actually practiced her flying, practiced lifting heavy duffel bags (because she knew she'd have to lift Christian out of the fire and all). So, go Clara! Woohoo!

The romance was actually well-developed.

WARNING, this is a minor spoiler. So if you don't want any spoilers at all, maybe you should skip this section.

Anyway, believe it or not, Clara did not actually fall in love with Christian. WHUUUUT. Nope, none of that insta-love, soul-mate crap. She fell in love with Tucker—a guy who she actually got to know and developed feelings for over an extended period of time. *GASP!*

I mean, she did still seem interested in Christian. And I imagine she'll get to know him better and he may end up being a conflict ... But still, I liked that she didn't totally lust after him, and when he asked her out she didn't dump Tucker or anything stupid like that. So, YES. THANK YOU, CYNTHIA HAND. This is paranormal romance done correctly!

Clara's mom is a frickin' badass.

You're probably like ... lolwut?

But seriously, when was the last time you saw a really awesome mom in a YA book? A lot of YA books suffer from "Disappearing Parent Syndrome" in which the parents are painfully absent or clueless during the whole story. Either that, or the parents are really awful and constantly arguing with their angst teen child.

And sure, Clara and her mom have some arguments. But over all, they have more of a *Gilmore Girls*-esque relationship. (Clara even said so herself.) And that was something refreshing. As a teenage girl who thinks my mom is awesome, it was nice to read a book in which the mother and daughter were actually friends—and in which the mom actually played a significant role in both her daughter's life and in the story. GO CLARA'S MOM.

The ending blew my mind.

Once I started getting to the end of this book, I had no idea how Ms. Hand was going to finish it. There was a lot leading up to this forest fire incident, so I feared there was going to be some really predictable and/or anti-climatic ending.

But no. Clara ended up having to make a really tough decision between what she wanted for herself, and what her greater purpose was. Like, my stomach actually hurt a bit when I tried to imagine myself in her place. It was like, DAMN CLARA, WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO?

And then suddenly, this HUGE plot twist came out of nowhere. I mean, I did not see it coming AT ALL. Normally I hate really big plot twists like that, but in this case ... I actually really liked it. I thought it added quite a bit of intrigue to the story, and I'm eager to see what happens with it in the next book.

(view spoiler)

So, yeah. This book was a pretty crazy journey for me. I started off loathing it, yet by the end I was like:

I really can't wait to read Hallowed.

Lora says

Clara Gardner is a Quartarius angel-blood. This means that one quarter of her blood is that of an angel's. This gives her wings that she's not yet learned how to use and abilities that are still developing. Lately strange visions of a mysterious boy and fire have been plaguing her, and that's just one aspect in the myriad of things she's yet to understand about her place on this earth. Believing that these visions are tied to her "purpose"---the one thing all angel-bloods are charged with accomplishing while on this earth---she goes in search of this unknown boy with her family and this leads her to Teton County, Wyoming, the place where she believes she'll find her charge and fulfill her purpose.

I'd have to say that one of my favorite things about *Unearthly* is its writing. For being a debut author, Ms. Hand sure knows her craft. Normally authors get better with time and experience, but Ms. Hand writes as if she's been doing it for years. Despite the fact that *Unearthly* is over four hundred pages, I managed to read it effortlessly within the span of forty-eight hours (Need I mention that I'm not a very fast reader?); I'd say that *Unearthly*'s intriguing plot and witty dialogue had something to do with this.

But the writing isn't the only thing *Unearthly* has going for it. The characters are very smart, funny, and likable, as well. I'm very particular when it comes to female characters, but Clara may very well end up being one of my favorites of the year. I know that may seem overkill since this is only January, but, as I said, the heroines of the novels I read are usually the most unsatisfactory and least intriguing aspect for me. Fortunately, that was not the case with *Unearthly*: Clara is smart, sarcastic, and confident; yet, because of the weight that is on her shoulders, she has a certain level of insecurity that I found quite endearing. It's safe to say that I was very impressed with her character. Her only flaw was her almost instantaneous attraction to Christian. While I do understand that he's supposed to be the one she has to save, I didn't understand why this means that she's destined to be with him.

Which brings me to one of my only problems with this novel: Christian. I realize that he is needed for the love triangle, but the boy is completely flat. In my opinion, he has no real character or personality whatsoever. And it's not until over two hundred and fifty pages into the novel that his character has to leave and go to New York for the summer. I have to say that this fact had me jumping up and down (metaphorically). Because this fact made way for Tucker, a character who you only get to see a few glimpses

of until this point in the novel. And it also gives Clara a chance to really see Tucker for whom he really is: the boy she's been overlooking this whole time. There's a specific passage that I'd like to share with you where Clara realizes this:

"What do you see in a guy like Christian Prescott?" he asked me that night when he dropped me off from prom. And what he was really saying then, what would have come through loud and clear if I hadn't been so blind was, Why don't you see me?"

This quote is one of my favorites because, well, for obvious reasons: it marks the start of when things really start to get serious between Clara and Tucker.

Another thing that I really liked about this novel is that the romance aspect isn't rushed like in most YA novels you read today. Clara and Tucker actually spend time getting to know one another before declaring their feelings for each other. I was very glad to see this because quite frankly I'm beginning to feel a little jaded with all of the instant love declarations being written in YA literature today.

As I said before, I loved Clara's character, but I believe that Tucker was my favorite. He's got the perfect mix of wit and boyish charm to make any girl swoon. And I also loved the fact that in this novel it's the girl who has the supernatural qualities. This book reminds you that it doesn't take special abilities or brooding to make a male character intriguing. Tucker's just himself and I loved him for that.

Well, I could go on and on about my feelings for this novel, but my suggestion for you is to stop reading this and go buy *Unearthly* and read it if you haven't already. Because, in the plethora of angel themed YA novels being published, *Unearthly* not only stands out but it ranks at the top.

Lyndsey says

So... I was wired on Christmas Stocking candy while writing this. **I'll warn you once. Only read the underlined parts:**

Unearthly's all about earth stuff. Just Kidding. It's not. Just Kidding. It is. Just Kidding. It's not... It's about UN-earth stuff. Like angels. Just Kidding. It's about devils. Just Kidding. I'm evil like a devil. Just Kidding. I am evil like a G6. Just kidding. I'm actually fly like a G6. Just Kidding. I don't even know what a G6 is. Just Kidding. Of course, I do. It's a cybernetic butterfly. Just Kidding. But wouldn't a cybernetic butterfly be cool? Just Kidding. This book was about cybernetic butterflies. Just Kidding. This book tells the story of Ellie Monroe, I mean, Clary Fray, I mean GARGAMELLLL. Just Kidding. It's about Clara Gardner. And if you don't already know that you must be living under a rock. Just Kidding. Why would be living under a rock? Unless you are a worm. Just Kidding. I know a worm. Just Kidding. No really, I do. Just Kidding. There are no worms in this book but Clara Gardner is part angel! There's also a really hot guy named Tucker. Maybe he knows where to find some worms. Just Kidding. Not really because... He's a cowboy. Cowboys should know something about worms. Just Kidding. There's another really hot guy named Christian, and Clara has a strange connection to him. They're actually Siamese twins. Just Kidding. They're not. Just Kidding. They are. Just Kidding. No really, they are. Just Kidding. I know: I'm evil. Not really. But there is an EVIL angel after Clara. Just Kidding. Angels can't be evil. Just Kidding. Yes, angels can definitely be evil. Exactly like this review. Just Kidding. You should read *Unearthly* because I said so. Just Kidding. But really... You should read this book. Do you really need more reasons than two hot guys and ANGEL vs EVIL ANGEL? Well, too bad. Just Kidding. No really. That's all I got.

Just Kidding.

No seriously.