



Crossing Over

Anna Kendall

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Roger Kilbourne has the ability to "cross over" into the land of the dead and speak with its residents. It is a startling gift, and not a pleasant one. Roger manages to escape his brutal uncle, who has exploited his talents for years; after he gets a job in the palace laundry, he thinks he will be safe. Instead, there are worse dangers. First, he falls hopelessly in love with the bewitching, willful Lady Cecilia; next, he is pulled into the midst of life-threatening court intrigue. Soon Roger is using his gift as a way to get the life he dreams of-even if it means bringing the dead back to the land of the living.

Crossing Over Details

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From Reader Review Crossing Over for online ebook

Bukcrz says

Great created world (and the only reason I kept reading) but a disgusting “romance”. I think this book would have been fine without the romance angle.

The male main character was in love/infatuated to a selfish airhead and sacrificed even the love of a better woman - and the lives of others - just to please the airhead.

Worse is that the male main character **kiss deeply, NOT just a peck** the dead airhead’s body - morbid and so base - I want to get that out as a warning. That is how debased the male character is.

The sad part is the better woman stuck with the male main character - who (the man) to me is the lowest portrayal of any man - even when she knows she was not valued as the selfish airhead.

Other than that, it’s an interesting created world.

Just Me says

Hmmm, not sure what I think about this one. It was captivatingly written. I picked it up because of the title, not knowing how the story would unfold. I may read another of her books, just to compare.

Charlotte Phillips says

This was a rather interesting and unique book that seemed to hold my attention from the very first word to the last one. The novel itself is based within a time period that I am not myself used to, it’s set in the olden times when kings and queens were actually very influential people and being on their good side was the most important thing. This though I felt was a wonderful element to the book itself because it meant that the imagination was widened out to consider all the differences that there are between that time period and the time period that we are in now. The area that the book was set within was well developed, a sort of layer upon layer matter, which meant that you could really build the whole scenario within your mind and see everything that you needed to see. The characters personae fitted well with the scenario and the scene that it was all set in and that of course meant that the story had a much stronger effect than perhaps your everyday basic tale that you would expect to come across. Rodger is a character of differences though as he clearly has a talent that is different and strange amongst the others, a talent that back in the days perhaps would have meant that you were hung and burnt in front of a large audience because what you were showing and representing was just not normal human behaviour. There are flaws though to the character and these are bits that I will touch on as I get through my review of the novel. In the beginning we get to see the story of his past, and we learn that he has the ability to cross over to the country of the dead as they call it. This was a wonderful concept to imagine as it meant that you started to really consider what it must be like to do such a thing and what it would be like as a place in person. However it’s his ability that allows him to pass there which is a little more or less untrue and for me not fitting to the description of his talent.

In order to pass over to the country of the dead he must cause himself a great deal of harm. At first we see his uncle taking advantage of this ability, he is using it as a method to gain money from others, by making Rodger pass over to the dead, to get all the details of the relatives that have been lost by those who seek him out. However in order for him to pass over he is very badly beaten and this was a cringe worthy moment of

the book. Although deep down you know that neglect and abuse was more common in these times and that a punishment was not given, it still feels very wrong to us, as we are taught that this is the wrong behaviour to reflect on a child. However, like they say, Karma strikes when it sees the time is best fit and that is very much so within the novel. Although the ending for his aunt who eventually does try to save him is brutal and wrong, his uncle also gets a well suited ending and we know that he will no longer have to put up with him. Instead he merely has to face the complications of the queen and the soldiers. The thing about this book I found, is that there is anger and drama and mystery the whole way throughout it. Its not a book that stops or pauses, its the sort of book that carries on going, that continues to tell you what has happened or is happening. Yes in some respects it makes the book a little too overdone because your too busy trying to remember whats happening where and who it is happening to and what is going to occur next. So although the book is active, you can see this as being a negative complexity that would make the book somewhat, if not very confusing.

There was a hint of romance within the novel but it was merely that for me, a hint of that and nothing more. I don't know if it is just that I was confused by the amount that was happening within the novel or that I simply grew tiresome of it after a while. I suppose I would have liked to have seen the book a little more spread out, after all it has already been confirmed that this is not the first in the series so why so much in one novel? Also I found it a little odd that the book was called crossing over and yet the ways that he seemed to cause pain to himself over and over again would be enough to either cause many disabilities or special needs, or just kill him altogether. This meant that the book became a little unrealistic in that you could see this was not possible. I know that its a fantasy based novel, but when you can start to work out that things would not actually be possible you can not help but see that its not so much as an exciting fantasy but a hit home hard fantasy. I do feel though that the book was well crafted. Not the best crafted novel but good enough to entertain me for a read for an hour or two.

I do like my historical based books but I do feel that this was perhaps a little over rushed when it didnt need to be. It would have been nice to have seen the author take their time with it, to make it so much more than just texts on a word. This is why I have awarded the novel a three star rating. It was a good book but it was not brilliant and there were many things I would have changed had it been up to me.

Amber says

Crossing Over was, by far, one of the worst books that I've read. Period.

First off, the main character was probably one of the stupidest people I've ever read about. He slept every single night with people near him, knowing that he had secrets but still perfectly willing to share them in his sleep-talk. Shouldn't any sane person know better? Especially when the freaking queen is about to murder his ass and LITERALLY threatens to like all the time. Also, Roger is the horniest teenage boy that has ever graced fiction. I sincerely doubt that a fourteen year old boy would get a boner from looking at some pretty lady.

OMG THE ROMANCE MADE ME WANT TO BARF ALL OVER ANNA KENDALL. He essentially lived his life saying, "DAMN THAT GURL IS LOOKING FINE AND I THINK I WANNA BONE HER. OH, check it out, there's another girl who noticed my existence! Maybe I should whip out my dick for her too! Wait! Maggie's my friend, but she's also a female. Do I sleep with her or no? ALRIGHT I'LL DO IT." Why would anyone want to have sex with him? He's an asshole who only thinks with his dick. And he kept mooning over this chick Cecilia who literally did nothing but giggle and try to remove all the STDs that she

contracted in her life as the classy whore of the castle.

As for the plot, literally nothing happened the entire time. The worst part was that if there was any action, Anna Kendall somehow managed to write it in a way that was SO INCREDIBLY BORING that I'm pretty sure I deserve an award for even completing this. The climax - you know, the point where the main character feels horrified or experiences some kind of revelation? COMPLETELY DESTROYED because of the author's unique ability to bore the shit out of me. The most interesting part was definitely the drama between the two queens, but it's so trivial in comparison to his traveling to see the dead people power, that most of that was just skipped over. Most of the stuff she covered was unimportant or unnecessary. For example, she didn't need to tell me all the different ways Roger managed to hide his hard on throughout the book.

The best part about this book was Kendall's worldbuilding, but even that had issues because she drew it out so goddamned long that I feel like I know everything about that place. If anyone abused their worldbuilding ability... Most of the time, all you really need is explain what's going on once or twice, but don't keep describing the goddamn place three or four times over and over and over. It's boring and it's a waste of words. After the first time she described the country of the dead, I was pretty much set for the WHOLE BOOK, but nope. Anna Kendall decided to bore me with three or four or twenty more descriptions for it.

I only finished this book so I could feel justified in making fun of it. I'm actually kind of angry that I wasted my time on this, but I hope that other people read this and take it as a warning.

Debbie says

I enjoyed the world that was built in this story but as for the story itself I thought it was just ok. I never came to like Roger. I know that he was raised in an abusive environment and that probably stunted his social growth but I found him to be irritating and dislikable. As is typical of most YA books these days there is the love interest. After he escapes life with his abusive uncle he fixates on Lady Cecilia and falls in "love" with her. I imagine it's because she's the first beautiful and lively female he meets as a part of his new life. But it irks me despite all the evidence that she is nothing but an empty headed twit that he fixates on her and is totally clueless about the other girl who is in love with him. He's like a child who sees a shiny toy and decides that is the one he must have despite anything else that comes across his path.

****Spoiler start****

Even though he does end up realizing what he had in front of him all the way it made me mad that he only gives up on Cecilia after she is gone for good. It's almost as if he is just settling for the consolation prize.

****End spoiler****

I was also hoping he was going to be one of those characters that overcomes the obstacles in his life to grow into someone who is heroic. I felt we do not really see that. He remains whiny, self absorbed and selfish other than his devotion to Cecilia. I do not understand why he inspires people like Maggie and Mother Chilton to help him when he's rude and ungrateful. When he does finally do something heroic it seems out of the blue.

The world this story takes place in was fascinating. It's basically a kingdom ruled by women and everyone sees it as the right of women to rule because they are the ones who give life. The idea of men ruling is totally

foreign to them when they meet people from another land who are ruled by men. It mixes a bit of medieval flavor, with fantasy and a bit of modern day with guns, a foreign weapon, in their world. I found it funny that the Queen's brother is married off to the Queen of another country in order to seal an alliance. It's like the polar opposite of the stereotypical male dominated world.

I felt like there were still unanswered questions about this whole world that Roger is able to cross over into, how he is able to do so and the history of the people at Soulvine Manor. I don't know if it's set up for a future book or not but it would have been nice to have more answers to make it feel like a complete story.

Overall it's not a bad book and I think others may enjoy it but it just wasn't a book for me.

Jana says

Shittiest book ever

Hallie says

Review up on *Strange Horizons*.

I disagree -- strongly -- with Connie Willis. Has the sky fallen yet?

Mollie says

When I first read the summary, I thought this book had a lot of potential. It did not live up to my expectations.

April says

The premise is interesting and has a lot of potential but far too dull for my tastes. Nothing 'stood out' at all and (referring to the erotic segments); I never got around to them, I lost interest so soon.

May try again at some point but it'll be placed very low on my to read list.

Rea says

Full review can be found [here](#).

The story starts by putting its best foot forward as we observe Roger, a slave to his uncle, being forced to cross over to the land of the dead in order to scam mourners out of their money. The author's idea of this land where the dead exist is not at all what I was expecting and so much the better for it. The way that it's

described, it's as though the dead are all waiting for something maybe? They sit and stare at nothing; they're, for the most part, unresponsive and only a few will rouse themselves long enough to interact with Roger. But then, though Roger describes this land as being heavily populated, I can't imagine that there were nearly enough dead there. This led me to speculate about what could possibly have happened to all those other dead from times gone by. Whether or not the author intends to address this in future books I couldn't say, but it certainly opens the door to vast opportunities.

After this strong opening, though, the story gets a bit weird as Roger arrives in the court of his Queendom. There were a lot of slow parts here, though I have to take into consideration that I was rarely able to read more than a chapter at a time and this may have affected how I saw the advancement of the plot.

The reader is introduced to Lady Cecilia at this point and Roger's infatuation. The story is told in Roger's voice and he believes himself to be in love with the pretty little flirt but it's obvious that it's only infatuation as there's actually very little substantial communication between the two characters, not to mention that Cecilia always treats Roger as her inferior (which in the court he is but he can't see that this means she could never bring herself to view him as a potential suitor). I didn't really like his obsession with Cecilia, mostly because I didn't buy that he could be that obsessed just due to her looks.

There is also, of course, a bigger political intrigue going on around them. This is court and what's court without political backstabbing? In this case, the Queendom is ruled by a queen who is supposed to pass power to her daughter when the daughter turns 35. However, this time around the old queen didn't consider her daughter fit to rule and refused to pass on the power. This didn't stop her daughter from having herself crowned and setting up her own court within her mother's court. She's also determined to get her Queendom at any cost.

Roger comes into all of this in that the young queen recognises him as one able to cross to the other side and she tries to use him to gather intel there. Of course, for the most part the dead won't talk to him so he invents a lot of this intel. This is another part of the book that I wasn't particularly fond of. The parts in the land of the living and the passages where Roger crossed over to the land of the dead had nothing to do with each other and it left me feeling unsatisfied. I understand why it was there and done like this, I just didn't enjoy it much.

Once Roger's out of the court again, chasing Cecilia as she's brought the queen's wrath down upon her head, things pick up again for a while. I really liked the intrigue of Soulvine Moor – a place no one will speak of but the place where Roger's mother died. I really liked the hints at who Roger is and I was fascinated by the picture painted at this point. I found myself really immersed in the book.

And then Cecilia comes back into it again and everything collapsed. I didn't like Cecilia to start with and Roger's unhealthy obsession with the girl and his selfishness that dictates all his actions at this point pushed me to the point where I didn't like Roger either. I found this part to be particularly boring as all it focuses on is both characters' bad points. I just ended up feeling really frustrated with both characters.

Thankfully, it picks up again for the final climax. I found myself completely immersed in the story at this point. I was itching to read all evening but couldn't slink away to find a quiet spot. Eventually, I managed to finish the novel, though. I feel that it left off in just about the perfect place; it has certainly caught my attention enough for me to want to read the sequel. Especially as there won't be any Cecilia in it!

The setting was very interesting and about the opposite of what might be expected. The world is fairly reminiscent of a mediaeval landscape but then the wild savages come with their firesticks that they call guns

– usually it'd be the more civilised society that gains the secrets of guns first but I really like what the author did here. As mentioned before, the land of the dead was also very interesting, particularly when Roger starts inadvertently affecting it. That was an original twist even if the twist itself could be seen a mile off.

However, I have to admit that I often found Roger to be a frustrating character. He had a lot of character flaws and at times these eclipsed his good points so much that I found myself wondering whether I really wanted to continue with this series after this book. The ending means that I do but it was touch and go for a while.

The whole thing with Cecilia really didn't work for me either. The problem with this is that it's Roger's desire for Cecilia that pushes certain points of the narrative. It just wasn't founded beyond Cecilia's beauty, which meant that Roger's obsession with the girl came across as creepy rather than romantic. I liked Maggie. She gave it to him straight and would put him in his place. I look forward to getting to know her better in the next book.

Choosing to write this book from a young male's point of view was an interesting decision on the author's behalf. It certainly made the book stand out from the masses of books written from a female point of view. I'm not completely sold on all Roger's bodily reactions, though, but that said not being a male myself I don't really know how all that works and maybe it's justified by the rampant hormones of a 14-year-old boy!

Helga Beuckelaers says

Even doorbijten totdat het boek op gang kwam ... om dan tussen de intriges van de Groenen en de Blauwen door te laveren. Voeg daarbij nog wat magische elementen en plaatsen zoals "Danderzij" en andere plaatsen en alle ingrediënten voor een boeiende (YA) fantasyverhaal zijn aanwezig. Benieuwd naar het vervolg!

Kit says

I snagged an ARC of this book (out in October) when I saw that it had a back jacket blurb from none other than Connie Willis, and I'm glad I did.

The first clue that Kendall is doing something new and different is the setting. I'm so used to the standard quasi-medieval fantasy world - motto: "all the pageantry, none of the dirt" - that when Kendall includes more believable details like disease and bad food, it's powerful.

The story follows a teenage boy with the ability to "cross over" into the land of the dead. Far from making him a superhero, this puts him in great danger as he becomes a pawn of progressively more and more powerful and ruthless people. The land of the dead is creepy, the characters are well-rounded (and sometimes also creepy), and the ending makes following the story all the way through worthwhile - even though it left me with a couple of questions that will nag me! This is definitely worth looking for when it comes out.

Natalia says

Fantastyka to gatunek, który kocham ca?ym sercem, ale o tym ju? nie raz Wam wspomina?am i pewnie

jeszcze nie raz to zrobi?. Po co o tym wspominam? Aby?cie zrozumieli, z jakiego powodu si?gam po tego typu ksi??ki bez g??bszego zastanowienia. Dlaczego w ich przypadku wystarcza mi po prostu sam blurb, no i mo?e jeszcze klimatyczna ok?adka, aby porwa? je z p?ki? Zaczyn? mo?e jednak od samego pocz?tku...

Roger Kilbourne jest ju? prawie m??czyzn?, jednak, co mu po tym skoro ci?gle ?yje w strachu przed swoim wujem – Hartahem. No i do tego... jego dar..., o którym nikt nie mo?e si? dowiedzie?, poniewa? móg?by wtedy zosta? oskar?ony o czary, a co za tym idzie... powieszony b?d? spalony na stosie. Ch?opak potrafi, bowiem przechodzi? do krainy umar?ych i rozmawia? z jej mieszka?cami (cho? to ostatnie nie nale?y do naj?atwiejszych). Przed d?ugi czas jego wuj, z premedytacj? wykorzystywa? ten fakt, aby zarabia? na ró?nych wiejskich jarmarkach. Jednak ci?gle by?o mu ma?o. Niestety plan szybkiego wzbogacenia si? przynió? mu tylko ?mier?, a Rogerowi natomiast namiastk? upragnionej wolno?ci. Nie na d?ugo... Ch?opak trafi?, bowiem na dwór królewski Reginokracji, w którym toczy si? cichy spór o w?adz? pomi?dzy matk? i córk?.

Pocz?tkowo pe?ni rol? m?skiej praczki na zielonym dworze królowej Caroline. Wydaje mu si?, ?e gorzej ju? raczej nie b?dzie... a jednak. Niby dostaje awans na b?azna samej królowej, jednak dodatkowe obowi?zki, jakie si? z tym wi?? wcale nie nale?? do przyjemnych. Tym bardziej, ?e królowa (sama oskar?ana o bycie czarownic?) doskonale zdaje sobie spraw?, i? Roger potrafi odwiedza? krain? umar?ych. Co z tego wszystkiego wyniknie?

Anna Kednall to tak naprawd? pseudonim ameryka?skiej pisarki, irlandzkiego pochodzenia – Nancy Kress. Kobieta ma na swoim koncie wiele presti?owych nagród mi?dzy innymi Nebul? i Hugo. Jej powie?ci, chocia? zaliczane do gatunków fantasy oraz science fiction, cechuje wy?tkowy realizm, a tematy, jakie w nich porusza cz?sto dotycz? dalekiej przysz?o?ci, rozwoju in?ynierii genetycznej oraz sztucznej inteligencji. By? mo?e w?a?nie, dlatego ich g?ówn? grup? odbiorcz? stali si? doro?li czytelnicy. Jednak w przypadku Na drug? stron?, sprawy maj? si? wr?cz odwrotnie. Ksi??ka rozpoczyna, bowiem seri? nosz?c? tytu? Kroniki Duszozo?li, która skierowana jest do m?odego grona mi?o?ników s?owa pisanego.

Jak ju? pisa?am na samym pocz?tku, po ksi??ki fantastyczne si?gam tylko znaj?c blurb i ok?adk?. Jednak w przypadku Na drug? stron? ten pierwszy aspekt nie do ko?ca mnie do siebie przekona?. Powiem wi?cej, sugeruje raczej banaln? historyjk? przepe?nion? do granic mo?liwo?ci romansami, flirtami, dworskim ?yciem, intrygami i politycznymi sporami. Raczej nie wiele ma to wspólnego z fantastyk?. Co wi?c sprawi?o, ?e da?am szans? tej powie?ci? Na pewno intryguj?ca ok?adka, a tak?e pewne zdanie... Dok?adnie takie:

„Kraina umar?ych to niebezpieczne miejsce... Podobnie jak ?wiat ?ywych...”.

Mi to w zupe?no?ci wystarczy?o, aby natychmiast zapa?a? ch?ci? zapoznania si? z histori?, w której umarli mog? odgrywa? znaczny rol?. Niestety, okaza?o si? pó?niej, ?e jest to chybione spostrze?enie. Prawd? mówi?c, jako? nie przypad?a mi do gustu koncepcja krainy umar?ych w wykonaniu Anny Kendall. Liczy?am na co? du?o bardziej intryguj?cego, energicznego (nawet, gdy mowa o umarlakach) i... mrocznego. Tymczasem przychodzi nam czyta? o spokojnej krainie, w której umarli zajmuj? si?... nic nie robiem. Nawet krótki epizod, jaki autorka postanowi?a nam zaszerwowa?, który mia? na celu „o?ywienie” akcji w tym miejscu, niczego nie zmieni?.

Kolejn? rzecz?, która mnie rozczarowa?a by? sam protagonista. Nie do??, ?e jego posta? by?a „p?aska” i nijaka, to jeszcze tak mocno gra? mi na nerwach, i? z mi?? ch?ci? bym go rozszarpa?a. Co prawda daleko mu do mojego anty ulubie?ca od Andrew Fukudy, ale musz? przyzna?, mocno go ?ciga. Pomijaj?c jednak ta ma?? dygresj?. Do tej pory nie bardzo wiem, czy rzeczywi?cie by? on a? tak g?upi, czy tylko takiego udawa?, aby wyci?gn?? dla siebie jak najwi?cej korzy?ci. Ja rozumiem, ?e to biedny ch?opak wychowany bardziej na niewolnika ni? wolnego cz?owieka, w wiejskiej i do tego dysfunkcyjnej rodzinie, a i

średniowieczne czasy, w jakich przyszło mu żyć, niczego nie ułatwiały, no, ale ludzie! Po co udawać głupszego niż się jest w rzeczywistości? żeby tylko wyciągnąć z każdej sytuacji jak najwięcej dla siebie? Ja rozumiem, że można się tymi wszystkim dobrami wręcz zachłystać, ale zazwyczaj każdy ma swój limit. Dla mnie takie zachowania, jakie przedstawia bohater, ocierają się wręcz o wyrachowanie i przebiegłość. Jednak to, co najbardziej razi, to fakt, że cały czas mowa w o osobie czternastoletniego chłopca.

Jeżeli chodzi o fabułę, to z początku miałam wrażenie, że skądą się na nią zbiór niepowiązanych ze sobą zbyt mocno, sytuacji, w jakie pakował się zazwyczaj Roger. Innymi słowami mówił, ani niczego nie wyjaśniał, ani nie wnosił zupełnie nic do całej historii. Tak przynajmniej wydawało się na pierwszy rzut oka. Dopiero ostatnie wydarzenia uświadomiał, jak wszystko jest ze sobą powiązione. Samo zakończenie utwierdza również w przekonaniu, że po kolejny tom jak najbardziej trzeba sięgnąć. Tempo akcji jest raczej spokojne, żeby nie powiedzieć nawet... lekko monotonne. Mimo to, od książki cięko jest się oderwać.

Na drugiej stronie może i nie okazało się tym, czego oczekiwałam, ale i tak miło spędziłam przy niej czas. Jestem bardzo ciekawa jak potoczą się dalej losy Rogera i jego znajomych. Co do polecenia i odradzania, to nie mam zamiaru robić ani jednego, ani drugiego. Sami zdecydujcie, czy macie ochotę dowiedzieć się, o co w tym wszystkim chodzi.

Kimberly Francisco says

Soooooo uneven. Parts of this were a solid two, but it soared at times to a four-star book.

A few things:

-I know the protagonist is a 14/15 year old male, but the constant references to his erection were jarring and out of place most of the time. One time he referred to it as he was unintentionally feeling up a mentally handicapped woman...very uncomfortable.

-The middle just dragged, but it picked up nicely at the end and was very exciting.

-I didn't buy the romance.

-It feels a lot like an unfinished book. There were many unanswered questions, but I didn't feel like the author was setting up for a sequel. It felt more like those threads were just dropped, which was a shame, because it was those unresolved threads I found most compelling.

I liked the storyline a lot. Despite the general plot (a teen can cross over into the land of the dead), this does not feel at all like the typical teen paranormal fiction that floods the current market. It's most definitely a fantasy, set in a fantasyland, and I'm glad I got to read it.

Charisse Nichole says

This was a unique concept, and it wasn't badly done nor was it badly written. It just wasn't for me. That's why it gets so few stars.

It stayed true to its medieval-esque setting, which I applaud the author for, but as a YA book, I didn't expect it to be quite so detailed or gruesome. The beginning and various parts towards the end made me feel physically ill. It was difficult to read in that respect. If she was going to be this gritty then I feel like she

should've gone for an adult fiction book with this tale. I'm assuming that since the main character is 14 when this starts, THAT is why it's labeled as a YA book, along with the level of writing style I suppose. It just didn't sit well with me that it was YA with all of those awful details and moments. It covered just about every disgusting, dark, horrible thing that can happen in life, all in one book. It was VERY hard to stomach.

I also didn't like nor understand the main character. I felt like I never got a true sense of who he is, what his morals are. He doesn't seem to have any morals (understandably so, given his childhood) nor does he seem to be particularly intelligent and yet he manages to survive within his horrible world. It just didn't seem to fit. He's smart enough and observant enough to understand what's going on around him when a crucial plot point arrives, but not smart enough or observant enough to figure out the overarching plot lines which are the most obvious to both the readers and the characters (IMHO). I just couldn't nail him down, what he wanted, what his morals were, if he even HAD any morals, if he was funny or smart or kind... I had no idea who he really was. His idea of love is absolutely ridiculous and annoying.

I felt AWFUL for Maggie. I wanted different things for her. I didn't connect with any character except maybe Maggie a little tiny bit. That made it hard to feel bad for all these horrible things that were happening to the characters.

I mostly just wanted the book to be done so I never had to think about it again. I almost wish I hadn't even finished it. The reason I finished it was to discover the answer to one of the mysteries presented near the beginning of the book. Little did I know, that this book is the first of a TRILOGY! The second of which I can't even find on Goodreads. I thought this was a standalone as I never heard anything about the sequels after this book came out back in the day. If I had known it was a series, I don't think I would've even given it a second shot. As it is, I'm glad I pushed through it so I can give my review with no doubts. Needless to say, I never did get the answer to that one mystery I was holding out for because it's essentially the cliffhanger for the next book. As much as I want to know how that plot line ends, we got enough clues in this book for me to make a solid guess at how things go down. That's enough for me. I don't want to see what new atrocities she comes up with for the next few books as I felt like she covered most of the worst ones already.

The ending also felt a little rushed. It was as if she realized she was getting close to her contracted number of pages and had to quickly finish everything. Things just sped up really fast in convenient ways to cover all the plot points she had left without covering all the time happening between them. She would start talking about an event, as if this event had been happening for a while and we the reader knew all about it, when this was the first time she had mentioned it! Solely because she didn't seem to want to write out how that event began; she wanted to jump right to her final point. It was an odd way to end a book. Almost as if she realized she needed a cliffhanger to get us to read the next book OR she realized she never did tie up that one mystery so she decided to write a second book last min or something ridiculous like that. It just didn't seem to be part of the overall plan, more as a last thought she threw out there. It was strange. I didn't like it. This should've just been a standalone book honestly. She only had one maybe two points to tie up. She could've EASILY done that within the confines of this book if she had wanted to. Oh well!

This wasn't a bad book, it had decent writing, decent characters, a new idea to present, and was very true to her world. I just didn't like that world and what happened there. It was too dark for me, as a YA book. It would be a totally different story if this was an adult fiction book. If you're super into those dark medieval tales where things get gory and disgusting and there doesn't seem to be many redeeming qualities in the characters, then this one is for you. Otherwise, I do not recommend this book to anyone. (And no, it is NOTHING like GoT or anything else in that genre. This is a one of a kind book.)
