



Guile

Constance Cooper

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In the Bad Bayous the water is thick with guile, a powerful substance that wreaks unpredictable changes on objects, animals, and even people who soak too long.

Sixteen-year-old orphan Yonie Watereye scrapes a living posing as someone who can sense the presence of guile, though in fact she has no such power--it's her talking cat, LaRue, who secretly performs the work.

While hunting for the secrets of her mother's past, Yonie discovers that someone is selling dangerous guile-changed objects for malicious purposes. Soon the resourceful Yonie and her feline companion face threats that could end their adventuring forever.

Reviewers have called Guile a refreshingly unique cross-genre novel with fantasy, mystery, and adventure elements.

Guile Details

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Author : Constance Cooper

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From Reader Review Guile for online ebook

Maureen says

I really enjoyed Guile by Constance Cooper so much so I was able to devour it in one day. First of all you just don't drink the water it contains guile which can change a person making them good or evil. Yonie is a sketchy character who makes her living as a "*pearly" someone who can see guile in other people or rather sense it's presence. This is a great read for anyone especially those who love Young Adult literature. I was provided this book by the publisher in exchange for an honest review.

Jasmyn says

I loved Yonie, I loved LaRue, the world was a lot of fun and there's a mystery to solve. Lots of good things on the pages as we follow Yonie and LaRue on their search for the person selling dangerous Guile affected objects. What is Guile? This is was a great concept of how things become magical based on some murky swamp water and how long the relic sits in it. Something a little different, but a little familiar, and added a very unique element to the story.

We don't really get to see the mystery begin for a few chapters though. I wish it had been introduced a little bit sooner so that I could enjoy it for a longer period of time. There a tons of loops and twists as Yonie and LaRue follow the trail. It leads them to long long family memebers, strange far off places that no one has ever heard of, odd creatures, and a lot of Guile.

It is quite an adventure to fit into one book that is just under 400 pages, but it flows very nicely from one point to the next. It never seems to rush or get bogged down, but has a very natural pace and flow. I'll be looking for more from this author.

This book was received in exchange for an honest review

- See more at: <http://www.hotofftheshelves.com/2016/...>

Annie says

Absolutely spectacular. A detailed, sweet, adventuresome tale filled with wonderful characters in a unique world. Definitely read!!!

Hesione says

Talking cats!!! Bayou setting! 1800s-esque class divides! Dialect! Strange, uncanny substances in the water! Realistic, self-shot-down opportunities at romance! Basically no romance in the book! I love love loved how the setting drove the book.

Stephanie Ward says

3.5 Stars

'Guile' is an intriguing YA fantasy novel that blends several genres such as action, adventure, suspense and mystery, together to create an original story that will have readers guessing until the very end. I'm a big fan of thrillers - including mysteries and suspense - so when I read that this book was a blend of those genres along with fantasy elements, I couldn't wait to read it. It lived up to any hopes and expectations I may have had for it, and turned out to be a very quick and enjoyable novel. The aspect of the story that fascinated me the most was the guile. I loved learning as much as I could about it - history, legends, what it can do to objects and living things, and it's mystical qualities too. This part of the book is very unique and really made it stand out from the rest of the genre for me. I loved getting to know both Yonie and LaRue (I absolutely adored her character!) and to watch them get out of sticky situations throughout the story. There's a bit of a mystery in the book about Yonie's family and some dark secrets, which I thought brought the book to new level and was a great addition to the plot itself.

One thing that bothered me a bit was the third person point of view the book is told in. I'm a huge fan of first person POV and I almost always believe that a story should be told from this perspective because of the deep connection that forms between the reader and the narrator. Since this novel is told from the third person POV, I wasn't able to lose myself inside the world the author created (which usually happens with first person POV). The world building was fantastic and I loved getting to know all of the places and people scattered throughout the story. I really wish that I could have slipped deeper inside of Yonie's world, because it was really original and had tons of potential - and I would have loved feeling like I was beside Yonie in this strange land while everything was happening. This is my own opinion (of course) and has nothing to do with the book or the writing itself. I'm sure that other readers will have differing opinions than mine and these things won't be an issue at all. It's just one of my personal quirks as a reader. Overall, this was an interesting book with solid writing, a good blend of genres, great worldbuilding, and a plot with a quick pace. I definitely recommend it to fans of YA fantasy, along with readers who enjoy paranormal, action, adventure, and mysteries.

Disclosure: I received a copy of the book in exchange for an honest review.

Sarah says

DNF...maybe I will later

Wendy says

There's Power in the Water

When Raincoast Books first pitched the synopsis of Guile by Constance Cooper, I was hooked! A bayou related title with fantasy AND a mystery? I was so in! It's not often I come across a title with a bayou-like setting (I'm intrigued by the marshy lands and the low hanging trees) and absolutely knew Guile was a must

on my to read list.

"The clouds drenched the land unrelentingly for the next four days. The series of storms was violent enough to make canoe travel impossible, or at least dangerous, though by the fourth day, Yonie was almost willing to try."

Guile by Constance Cooper was, put simply, unique. I knew before picking it up that it would be, however it wasn't just the bayou inspired setting OR it's mysterious powers that stood out for me - it was Constance's writing. Although difficult to settle into in the beginning, Constance's writing was lyrical, and steadily flowed from chapter to chapter - like a constant and moving stream. It played to the uniqueness of this epic YA fantasy/mystery, and it also solidified Constance's portrayal of Yonie's overall character - quizzical and always searching.

Overall, I found *Guile* to be an intriguing adventure! Discovering Yonie's quirks, her past, and tagging along with the mystery and learning every little secret *Guile* had to offer was an absolute thrill. I strongly feel readers of all ages will enjoy Yonie and will find Constance's addition to the YA genre absolutely refreshing.

Elisquared says

When I first read the description for this book, I knew it was one I wanted to read. I love the idea of guile, and it effecting the people and objects it encounters. And I love the idea of this teenager going on investigative adventures with her talking cat. This sounded like such a fun and different fantasy book, that I knew I wanted to get my little paws (hehe) on it!

Yonie is a great heroine! She cares about people, shows compassion and tenacity, and just wants to help; a good character for young girls for sure. She has a strength about her all through the book that helps her push through different circumstances and still be okay. I really loved that about her, and made me really invested in her journey to find out more about her past. Of course, LaRue was fabulous! She, even while being a cat, gives off a definite big sister vibe. She is there to help guide Yonie and support her. she protects Yonie, just as Yonie protects her, creating a really deep bond between the two, which I loved and makes you sometimes forget that LaRue is a cat!

The world that is built in the book is fabulous. I love the whole idea of guile, especially because I was taught at a young age that objects hold memories of the people who possess them and can reflect those memories/emotions/whatever you want to call them. This is definitely seen within the different guile-effected objects that Yonie and LaRue encounter. The bayou itself is so full of life and different people, that you really start to see yourself in this world. I love such intricate and imaginative worlds and makes me want more!

There are a lot of twists throughout the book, some of which you can see and others smack you upside the head! I love a mix of genres, and *Guile* was a total mashup with the perfect amount of fantasy, thriller, and mystery thrown together. If you've been looking for a fresh new book, then *Guile* is a MUST-READ!

Stephanie says

I enjoyed reading this debut novel by Constance Cooper. As I read it, I kept picturing the setting as a fantastical version of New Orleans. Yonie Watereye is a fake seer (aka a Pearlie) and her cat LaRue is the one actual doing the "readings." Yonie protects LaRue from those who would harm her and LaRue helps Yonie survive. Yonie leaves on a quest to find out the truth of what happened the night her parents were murdered. Along the way, readers meet her Bayou cousin Gilbert, a crazy aunt and a cast of entertaining characters. There is a lot to love about this book. I highly recommend it to those who love a good light-hearted fantasy novel.

Lauren says

Excellent setting, decent characters, lots of minor plot lines that just disappear. Cooper's background as a short story writer is evident.

I recommend this for middle grade readers, not older YA. The plot lines aren't satisfying and the characters are too superficial.

Paige (Illegal in 3 Countries) says

See more of my reviews on The YA Kitten! My copy was an ARC I got from Amazon Vine.

Diversity Rating: 0 – What Diversity?

Racial-Ethnic: 0 (if the characters are POC to go with their Creole accents, it isn't mentioned)

QUILT BAG: 0

Disability: 0

Intersectionality: 0

There are some books you instantly know you want as soon as you hear about them. Others need some time to grow on you. Guile was neither of these. To be entirely honest, I requested it on a whim based solely on the fact that one of the major characters is a talking cat. **REMEMBER, DON'T FOLLOW MY EXAMPLE. I MAKE BAD DECISIONS OFTEN.** Surprisingly enough, this was not one of my bad decisions! Guile entranced me and drew me right into the heart of the Bad Bayous that Yonie calls home.

Admittedly, Guile was an airplane read for me and I have this odd trend of liking books more than usual if I read them on while flying, but I genuinely think I would have enjoyed myself just as much no matter the altitude. Its worldbuilding is so unlike anything you've seen before that it can be alienating, quite frankly, and I had difficulties visualizing the Bad Bayous from start to finish. That's the only thing that could keep you from fully falling in love with the book.

So what's there to love? **SO MUCH.** Guile gleefully blurs the lines between genres over the course of the novel. The alternate universe—it's never indicated that their world was once ours—clearly marks it as fantasy, but the easy acceptance by all of the strange checks the magical realism box as much as any work of straight magical realism. I've been dying for a YA novel unlike anything I've ever read and Guile is absolutely that.

That worldbuilding pairs well with Yonie's journey toward the answers of one never-that-simple question: "Who am I?" She has to solve the mystery of who's sending out malicious guiled objects too, but the majority of the book is about trying to find out who she is and define herself. Her cat LaRue is a standout

character as well; the relationship between girl and mother/sister-like cat is sweet and as difficult as the relationship between any pair of sisters or any mother/daughter pair.

In case you need a break from romance, Guile will suit you there too. Her cousin's feelings for her are made clear, but nothing is ever acted upon and Yonie shows no indication of ever doing so. (Yes, cousin, but it's more complicated than that for reasons I don't feel like spoiling. That entirely storyline was lovely, albeit resolved too quickly for my tastes.) Had romance happened, it would have felt deeply forced to me, so thank goodness for that!

Really, I barely have words to explain this. Yonie discovers her family and its secrets, learns how deeply tied she is to guile and guiled objects, and comes into herself after being orphaned and forced to fake her way through life. Sentient objects, hijackings of massive houseboats, people with gills and scales and malformed hands thanks to the influence of the guile—and more. You just need to read it.

Guile is absolutely a new favorite of mine I'll be recommending to friends who love magical realism and general strangeness. It works perfectly as a standalone and I think it is a standalone, but if more novels set in the Bad Bayous turn up, you won't find me complaining. I'll be too busy clicking my way over to Amazon to preorder them. If you like Natalie C. Parker's novels *Beware the Wild* and *Behold the Bones* like my friend Bekka does, you'll want Guile. That's why she'll find my copy of Guile in her mailbox soon.

Hannah (fullybookedreviews) says

I might have had a more pleasurable reading experience with this one, had my eARC not been so badly formatted – no capitalisations and words randomly broken up, which made things rather frustrating.

That said, Guile wins points for its unique setting and concept – a bayou where inhabitants mainly get around by boats, surrounded by swamp water that contains a magical substance called guile, which has the ability to turn objects or people a tad more strange and magical than they were before. Citizens largely look down upon those with abilities to sense guile, particularly since they tend to be lower class, unless in need of their services – possessing an object acting oddly, for instance.

Our protagonist, Yonie, and her talking cat find themselves providing such a service - she has no immediate family, and needs some way to put food on the table. Yonie as a character is fiercely independent - largely out of necessity, and has her heart in the right place, although is prone to making some impulsive decisions. Nevertheless, she's someone you can root for, as she tries to work out the complicated remnants of her past that are making themselves known.

The book also contains a wonderful shut-down of the "if boys are mean to you it means they like you" trope. Exhibit A:

"You think that excuses you?" Yonie spat. "You just say, 'oh, all along it was just because I liked you!' and then I say 'oh, poor thing, how sweet?' Gilbert, you didn't pester me. Mosquitoes are pesky. You were cruel. You and your brothers made me miserable for years. For your own entertainment. And you were the worst!"

However, at certain points I found myself bored, and the writing style didn't always gel with me – particularly the heavily accented dialogues. (Then again, I'm also in the midst of a major slump where nothing at all is appealing to me!)

If you like the sound of the guile concept, along with a lack of romance and a portion of adventure, then this might be one to try.

ARC received from Edelweiss in exchange for an honest review. Quotes taken from uncorrected proof and may differ from final publication.

Sha says

I bought this book soon after its release date back in 2016, prompted by its promises of magical "guile" water. However, once the book landed on my bookshelves, its intrigue faded and I never got around to reading it ... until now.

The first third of this book was aimless, if interesting. Yonie Watereye is introduced as an orphan sixteen-year-old who makes her meager living posing as a "pearlie," a.k.a. a human who is able to sense if objects have been imbued with magic. The actual pearlie (or slybeast, rather) is her cat, La Rue. Yonie takes on a client that I assumed would launch the plot forward — but instead seemed to be one in a series of stepping stones towards the larger plot, which only kicked in much later.

Cue me growing invested in a story-line that meant very little twenty pages later. I simultaneously appreciate Cooper's skill in creating fascinating adventures/mysteries for Yonie and La Rue to solve ... and dislike her consistency in abandoning those plot threads with little resolution for the characters involved. One example I'll use comes from the very beginning of the story (so I will spoil little). Yonie and La Rue receive an item from a client but the client goes missing. They search for the client, meet his family while trying to find them, assume the item has something to do with it all and look into the item's history, so on and so forth. THEN Yonie comes across a different mystery and, while she does end up figuring out where the client went, the reader does not get any reunion with the client, we do not meet the family again, anything. The level of investment at the beginning does not match the mini-plot's wrap-up.

Obviously Guile had its own universe to introduce, which Cooper did without leaving info dumps scattered on the pages. (Thank you!) But she also did not give me a full picture of what guile was, or how a person becomes a pearlie, or where exactly all this was taking place until halfway through the novel, which did complicate reading somewhat. This did not make reading the book impossible, but it does bare mentioning: if you're a little disoriented at the start, explanations will come.

I loved La Rue. A talking cat? That can go wrong or that can go right. But La Rue was charming and level-headed and that voice of wisdom that Yonie lacked from pretty much every other adult in this book. Sometimes I wish La Rue was a little bit more sassy, because I always picture my cats as super sass-masters, but she was still a standout. Sadly, Yonie did not always strike all the same chords with me. She relied on others to make her own decisions a lot (particularly La Rue) and without advice, she made some really brash, really dumb decisions that had me burning from secondhand embarrassment. I truly grew to love her at the end of the book, when she puts her foot down with a love interest (that scene made me laugh so hard) and finds a way to make her own dreams come true.

RATING

I think some people will rate this book high and some will give it more modest ratings like myself -- it's truly based on taste. I'm settling on three stars primarily because the actual plot of the book doesn't emerge (and stay prominent) until the mid-point of the book. Until then, it feels like a collection of mini-mysteries

surrounding guile objects ... which were interesting, but did puzzle me, especially since it left the ending a bit rushed.

Mackenzie Ross says

2.5

Kelly Gunderman says

Check out this and other reviews on my young adult book blog, Here's to Happy Endings!

***Guile* is one of the most original, thought provoking novels that I have read in a very long time.** It takes all the usual young adult cliches and throws them overboard, and it's just great. It isn't the same book you've read at least 10 times - *Guile* is a breath of fresh air that will captivate you from the very first page.

I have to admit, when I started reading *Guile*, I was a little skeptical...it's been a while since I've read anything that was even close to being in the same genre of books as this one. I still don't really know exactly how to classify this one, so instead of trying, let me tell you a little bit about this little gem.

Yonnie Watereye (not her real name, but the name she goes by), lives in the swampy area of Wicked Ford, where the water is full of guile, which is a substance that gives objects certain powers. While she is sixteen and lives without any family, she has her cat, LaRue, who is not only her best friend, but like her sister. **Here's the interesting thing about LaRue - she's a cat who can talk.** Yep, this book is chock full of interesting dialogues between Yonnie and LaRue, and while at first the writing kind of irked me, I started to look at LaRue as being an older sister like figure to Yonnie, and I started to enjoy the conversations they have. Since LaRue is essentially a slybeast (an animal who was affected by the guile), and the people in Wicked Ford and surrounding areas do not take kindly to slybeasts, Yonnie and LaRue try their best to keep the fact that LaRue can talk a secret.

Yonnie makes barely enough money to get by, and she manages this by offering her services as a pearly, which is an individual who can sense an object that has been touched by guile and has powers. **Only, Yonnie isn't really a pearly...in fact, she has none of the talents it takes to perform these seeings.** But LaRue does, and the two of them find ways to make this work. It's complicated and kind of a struggle, but Yonnie does what she has to.

There is A LOT of stuff going on in this book. For one, Yonnie is trying to find out who her father is, which is a complicated endeavor. She's also trying to track down a guile filled object for a girl she met, Justine, whose father is acting strangely, and she believes it has to do with something like this. At the same time, Yonnie is also trying to live a somewhat normal life (aside from having a talking cat and an interesting profession), and she encounters all kinds of interesting people and situations on the way.

There are parts of this book that make you laugh, and certain parts that make you cringe (such as all the horrible things Yonnie and LaRue have to endure), but they all just add to the awesome experience of this book. I found myself referring to the map in the front of the book quite often (glad it was there), because it's kind of hard to imagine without one. The book itself is just so engaging and enjoyable to read - the story

flows pretty smoothly and that makes it really easy to get engrossed in. The characters are a little different that we're used to seeing, but it makes the book even better, in my opinion.

I read through this quickly, because the story kind of just sucks you in and makes you keep reading to see how it all turns out. There are some twists in here, and some parts that make you wondering "wait, what," but I absolutely loved this book, and I loved how it deviated from the typical YA novels and really shook things up. ***Guile* was definitely a fun read, with a bit of fantasy and mystery, and it's sure to put a smile on your face (did I mention it has a talking cat?). So if you're looking for something different than you're used to, and you like adventure (which this book is full of!), then check this one out!**

Note: I received an ARC copy of this book from the publisher in exchange for an honest review.
