



Relic

Renee Collins

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After a raging fire consumes her town and kills her parents, Maggie Davis is on her own to protect her younger sister and survive best she can in the Colorado town of Burning Mesa. In Maggie's world, the bones of long-extinct magical creatures such as dragons and sirens are mined and traded for their residual magical elements, and harnessing these relics' powers allows the user to wield fire, turn invisible, or heal even the worst of injuries.

Working in a local saloon, Maggie befriends the spirited showgirl Adelaide and falls for the roguish cowboy Landon. But when she proves to have a particular skill at harnessing the relics' powers, Maggie is whisked away to the glamorous hacienda of Álvaro Castilla, the wealthy young relic baron who runs Burning Mesa. Though his intentions aren't always clear, Álvaro trains Maggie in the world of relic magic. But when the mysterious fires reappear in their neighboring towns, Maggie must discover who is channeling relic magic for evil before it's too late.

Relic is a thrilling adventure set in a wholly unique world, and a spell-binding story of love, trust, and the power of good.

Relic Details

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Author : Renee Collins

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From Reader Review Relic for online ebook

Cathy says

I loved this story. It isn't often you find a western were old magic influences what goes on in the lives of the people. Plus it's a true page turner. There's hardly a dull moment. The scenes flow together well with characters that you find your self rooting for. Well done Ms. Collins. I wish she'd written another.

Kelsey says

Relic is a fantastic debut about cowboys, magic, and the lengths to which people go for family.

Maggie flees from the fire that razes her hometown and kills her family. She takes a job in a saloon to try to support herself and her little sister Ella. All she wants is to survive, but when her friend Yahn, an Apache, is falsely accused of causing the fire, she has to investigate. She stumbles into a world where wealth can buy everything: endless food and beautiful parties, magical relics (the bones of long-dead mystical beasts)... and potentially Maggie herself.

The mixture of magic and history was amazing. Relics are fossils of unicorns, sirens, goblins, and other creatures that carry bits of magic. People who who wield them can create fire, manipulate water, or commit more insidious acts. To add realism to the story, relics are mined like ores, traded, catalogued, and counterfeited.

The novel also builds a beautiful setting of the Old West with white folks, Apaches, Haciendos, and East Asian immigrants. I can count on one hand the number of Westerns I've read, so for me this was fresh and entertaining. The magic is woven in to feel natural and unobtrusive; think *Daughter of the Empire*. A good theme that runs throughout the novel is that the white folks are trying to kick the Apaches off their land (sound familiar?) to mine the magical relics that the Apaches hold sacred (wait, what?). And since it's the wild west, there is action. No shoot outs but plenty of horse chases, bar fights, and fire.

Maggie is very Little House on the Prairie, if the prairie were full of basilisk bones. She buttons the top button, wouldn't flirt unless the man called on her properly, and doesn't know a single four lettered word. At the same time, she slaps a man who offends her, stands up to a sheriff, and rides horses across the desert. Some people will think her prudish, but I think she had character without making everyone around her feel guilty. In one scene, Maggie's friend Adelaide pour shots for Maggie, Adelaide, and another friend to soothe their frayed nerves. While her friends take the shots, Maggie leaves the drink sitting on the table. She doesn't preach against their sins or make herself out to be better than them; she is who she is and she lets others be who they are.

The other characters aren't as fleshed out as Maggie, but they are unique in their own ways. The villains of the book were particularly well-crafted, and as the mystery of the fires unfolded, I enjoyed guessing who was to blame. The love interest Landon is a good complement to Maggie and not an annoying insta-love. If you want hot and heavy, look to showgirl/prostitute Adelaide and cowboy Bobby.

There are a few negatives. The book has some happy coincidences, particularly in the second half. Maggie suffers from right place, right time syndrome. I also think the book gets off to a good start (Fire! Flight!

Rescue!) but slows down in the middle third. Maggie doesn't have a clear goal, and she seems to get sidetracked once she falls in with Alvar. The story picks up again in the last third. Finally, the ending itself. I was a little disappointed that Maggie did get preachy after all, and there were a few jumps in logic to make the ends tie up neat. Still, for the most part I was satisfied and would definitely read a sequel.

One final thought... When I was a teenager, I ran out of books to read. I loved fantasy, but YA fantasies could be short or childish and adult fantasies could be... well, "adult fantasies". I wanted something exciting, magical, long enough to last a summer afternoon, and not rated X. (I stumbled on Sharon Green's *Convergence* when I was twelve. Not good.) *Relic* fits these requirements. It's an entertaining, rich story that's not smutty or squirting demon blood on every page.

Highly recommended.

[Read for the 2013 Debut Author Challenge, <http://hobbitsies.net/debut-author-challenge/>]

Vincent Trigili says

Relic is a first person account of the early life of Maggie Davis, a sixteen-year-old girl, and her baby sister Ella, who live in a world very loosely based on the old west of America. Maggie and Ella have a rough start in the book as the first chapter introduces us to them through the death of their family and destruction of their hometown. The story follows the girls as they find a way to survive in the harsh world of that day and get wrapped up in a web of magic, deception and intrigue.

Maggie is a genuinely likable main character who starts off as your typical teenage girl with no special powers or skills, just a love for information about relics. She struggles with the conservative values her family has tried to instill into her while making friends who are decidedly less conservative in their values. Her main goal in the story is to take care of her baby sister, at any cost, but she is pulled into a situation that is far larger than either of them.

The novel is well written with clean and well-edited prose. I did not notice any issues with typos, or grammar, so if there are any they were not enough to kick me out of the story. *Relic* is written at an easy to read level, which should be easily approachable by the vast majority of readers. I did not come across any words that I needed to use the dictionary for, nor were any of the grammar constructions hard to follow. I would guess it to be at a sixth grade level of difficulty in reading. I would put the level of reading difficulty as similar to my own books.

As far as the content goes, the book should be safe read for any teenager and up. There is a little bit of language and some very suggestive scenes, but nothing that would give me as a parent pause before letting a teenager read the novel. I would be careful of a pre-teen reading this novel, and suggest that parents pre-read this book and decide based on the maturity of their children.

Over all I enjoyed the book, but there were two weaknesses with the telling of Maggie's story. The first issue has to do with the first chapter. It felt too contrived, almost like the author was forcing it in just to give a back-story to main character. In my opinion the book would be stronger if the first chapter was dropped completely. It would take very little editing to get the backstory into the story, and nothing would be lost.

The second weakness is that the ending felt a bit like a rushed wrap up. It was a good ending, and one that

definitely leaves the door open for a sequel, but still it felt a bit rushed. I do not want to spoil the ending for anyone, so I will not give any details. You will just have to read it to find out what I mean. It was a good ending, but not a great one. It did not end on a cliffhanger, but there were definitely loose ends that lay the groundwork for a sequel.

As I mentioned, over all it is a good story and it is told well. I think teenagers and up who enjoy YA fantasy with a strong romantic under current will enjoy this book.

I was given an Advanced Reader Copy (aka ARC) of Relic for the purpose of this review via an online promotion.

Vivien says

Maggie Davis is all on her own after a raging fire decimated her town and killed her parents. Now she must protect and younger sister and persevere in the Colorado town of Burning Mesa. In her world, long-extinct magical creatures such as dragons and sirens exist. Their bones are mined and traded for their residual magical elements. Harnessing these relic's powers will allow the user to wield fire, turn invisible, or to even heal the worst of injuries.

Maggie befriends the spirited showgirl Adelaide while working at a local saloon and soon falls for the roguish cowboy Landon. But she has a gift. Maggie has the particular skill of being able to harness the relics' powers. When the wealthy young relic baron Álvaro Castilla catches sight of Maggie he whisks her away to his glamorous hacienda. As Álvaro trains Maggie in the world of relic magic, his intentions aren't always clear. But when the mysterious fires reappear in their neighboring towns, Maggie must discover who is channeling relic magic for evil before it's too late.

Honestly, that synopsis made me think I would enjoy this book more than I actually did. It really surprised me because I love magical creatures and the idea of relics. But in the end I struggled quite a bit and kept putting this book down. I never truly connected to this novel and the characters within. Relic just did not captivate my attention at all.

I think my main criticism is the lack of explanation. There is enough action to keep the pace plodding along, but aside from that, the characterization is lackadaisical. The secondary characters are rather mediocre and don't get enough face time. Add to that a meager love interest that results in insta-love, my frustrations with this book left me disenchanted.

I would classify Relic as more of a lighter fantasy novel and I really had hoped for more of a high fantasy read. With creatures and relic magic set in the western US, I expect a well rounded and fleshed out concept. Reading a slew of excellent reviews for Relic, I feel like the odd one out. This may just be the case of 'it's just me' and what my expectations were leading up to this read. But it came down to my overall enjoyment while reading this book, and in the end, I just couldn't force it.

*eARC provided for an honest review

Jessica says

After Maggie's parents and brother are killed in a fire, she finds work at a scandalous saloon – but she's soon whisked away by a rich relic baron. Can she trust him? And who's responsible for setting fires like the ones that killed her family? Honestly, I'd been dying to read RELIC since I read the deal announcement, and it didn't disappoint. It's peopled with Old West prototypes – spunky orphan girl, handsome cowboy, whore with a heart of gold, cruel brothel owner – who come alive on the page. What really stood out for me was the amazing, imaginative worldbuilding – an Old West in which people mine not for gold but for relics imbued with ancient magic – bits of siren and vampire and dragon bone. Some relics are innocent enough (a water-based relic could help farmers get through a drought) while others are dark and twisted, but they all give their users power – and Maggie finds she can wield them better than most. Completely fascinating premise, no? There's a creepy scene in the caverns with ghost coyotes that I loved, and another where Maggie falls under the spell of a dangerous relic, and the one where she meets her cowboy while swimming in a creek and is scandalized and...well, I could go on. I loved this book so much I blurb'd it: RELIC is like nothing else I've read - a historical fantasy teeming with ghost coyotes, duplicitous Haciendos, sexy cowboys, and dangerous relic magic. I loved spending time in Collins' magnificent reimagining of the Old West! (read in ms; will buy for sure; obviously recommend)

J.A. Belfield says

Disclaimer: I received a copy of this title from the publisher in exchange for an honest review. This has in no way affected my opinion of the book.

So, I did my regular old milarky of accepting a review book without even reading the blurb again. However, there is nothing quite like the feeling when you know you've opened the pages into a land of something pretty special. Because Relic just seemed so fresh to me. It's unique to other books I've read lately. It's original. And the characters? Man, the characters are great.

Young Maggie leads the way in Relic, and from the off we connect with her—how can one not as she witnesses a fire destroy her home, followed by her brother's sacrifice so she and her sister can be rescued by an Apache and live, and she suspects her parents are ravaged by the same fire that has stolen her life. And all this happens within the first few pages. This is such a powerful opening, ensuring young Maggie has our attention, our empathy, and our hearts, and demands we sit up and want to fight her corner. And she does a great job of clinging tight to us the entire way through. From one catastrophe to another, Maggie faces challenge after challenge and trial after trial, the overcoming of each one seeming to lead her to the next. Even when a potential love interest is woven in, Maggie is challenged—though that's mostly by herself, her naivety and insecurities.

Landon is an AWESOME cowboy. He's cute. He's flawed. He's pretty 'real', and I enjoyed his company easily as much as Maggie did—and possibly more. However, he's not the only male on the scene, and the reader is left confused about that—not so much who she might be wooed by, but with whom she's meant to end up.

Because there's the Apache, who is equally as awesome as Landon, and with a much deeper and meaningful connection to Maggie, which the reader has a tough time trying to interpret. I mean, even once it all comes to light and that element of the story unfolds, it's difficult to tell just how 'deep' a connection there is between Maggie and him, and on what level they're meant to be drawn together.

And then we also have rich dude, who shouldn't even pay the likes of Maggie any mind but is being 'charitable' to her from the off: Alvar. From the get-go, the reader doesn't quite know what to make of him. Is he genuine? Isn't he? Does he want more from Maggie? Or is he honest in his intents? He sends off so

many mixed signals—for good reason—that I don't think even he knows whether he's coming or going. And Alvar keeps you guessing right up to the very end—because he is one of the best mysteries to be unfolded within this book.

Which brings us to the plot. It was, in a nutshell, great. The intricate weavings and tightly tucked in threads, and the twists and turns and surprises, and betrayals and lies and deceit, and the so-greatly-portrayed characters that anybody could be behind the burnings—all of this keeps the reader turning those pages with an eagerness to discover exactly where we're all being taken.

My only complaints regarding *Relic* are: 1) I wasn't sure completely of the world building. Like: is it set in an evolved version of our own world? Because it appears to be (though I'm not from the US to recognise if the places were real). But, then, if it's set in our world, what time period is it set in. Or has the author taken complete creative license on this front? Although not knowing this didn't really stop me enjoying the story, I did keep pondering from time to time, and it would have been better if that was completely clear. And 2) I wasn't wholly sure for a little while on Maggie's age. By the time I noticed her age mentioned, I'd been reading a while. If it was mentioned prior to that, it wasn't done so prominently enough to embed in my brain. And I had trouble grasping her age. In parts, she seemed a little older than she was meant to be. I understand that dramatic circumstances in a life can force a person into maturity, but she seemed mature from the off, rather than growing into that. I think I wanted a little more of her naivety to show through—especially regarding certain aspects of the book that would be considered inappropriate, in this day and age even, for a 16 year old to be around (because it was like none of the laws of our world today applied in this created version of it). But, again, this only stalled me for minor ponderings and didn't exactly mar my reading pleasure.

Anyway, those small gripes aside, I truly am greatly looking forward to the second instalment. I mean, more cowboys, and Wild West type scenery, and action, and legacy, love, loss, and betrayal, and magic, PLUS a fantasy-like feel to the writing that flows with little trouble? Dude, sign me up.

J.R. Johansson says

Relic is a true favorite of mine. The description and worldbuilding are breathtaking. I love the concept of the magic remaining in relics of extinct magical creatures. The wild west feel comes through with vivid clarity and I adore the characters. Maggie is loyal, smart and fantastic. Love, love, love!

C.G. Drews says

Cowboys and magic – what more could you want?!

Honestly, I haven't read anything like this book. It has aspects of the good old favourites – American western, cowboys, magic, dinosaur bones, adorable little sisters, and several guys falling for one sixteen year old. Mash it all together and you get *RELIC*. Funky and sparky with an ending to KILL YOU. Let's just say: bookish hangover.

First things first: the combination of Old Western and magic. Brilliance. I'm not a fan of historical fiction, so I had doubts coming into *RELIC*. My fears didn't vanish until halfway through, but after that I was sold. People have "relics", which are the bones of fabled beasts, like unicorns, vampires, and dragons. They give them special powers. Seriously – cool. I'm of the opinion you can put superpowers into any situation and

BOOM. Insta-awesome. But, moving on, shall we?

Characters! Unfortunately, Maggie Davis (narrator) didn't resonate with me. She was the typical "strong" female heroine minus the kick-butt aspects. I found her refreshing, but no click. Her relationship with her little sister Ella is sweet, but I needed more. I only cared about Ella because she was small and had lost her family, perfect fodder for tears. But had Ella held a spunky personality, oh, I'd have been sold 100%. To me, it felt like she was just Maggie's tipping point, to be reused whenever Maggie needed to be manipulated. Adelaide, on the other hand? Very well done. She's the hot prostitute, working a slave contract. But she has power to her character.

As for the men of the tale, there was NO love-triangle. It may seem otherwise, but nope. Crush the clichés (woot!). We do have three strapping young men, two (the cowboy and rich landowner) want Maggie, the third (Native American chap) is just there. Literally. Just there. I enjoyed the dynamics of Maggie and Landon's (the cowboy) relationship. Sweet and snappy. I was intrigued why the rich landowner, Alvar, would want Maggie at all. For goodness sakes, she's sixteen and nothing special.

I appreciated how RELIC handled issues such as prostitution and mistresses. Sexual innuendos are there, but in reality the book is very clean and younger-reader friendly. To be historically accurate, yes, prostitution is an issue. The lanky cowboys don't hang out in the saloons just for the drink. I feel the author was careful and tasteful in her portrayals. I also LOVED how Maggie was so "proper". She had a heart attack when she wore a dress with (gasp) no sleeves. I really enjoyed the trip back-in-time.

The writing is beautiful, the plot substantial (although I couldn't remember all the villains names and, as a result, didn't really know who to hate) and the ending enough to knock your socks off. I was torn though. No spoilers, but Adelaide's conclusion disappointed me. It took me a while to get enthralled, but afterwards I was glued to my kindle screen.

Bring out the bones! RELIC is a rich book, with the smell of the good ol' west and the trimmings of epic fantasy.

Thank you to Entangled Teen for the ARC!

Roxanne says

This has been on my TBR for quite some time, mostly because umm I love the cover so honestly when I was given a chance to review it for Entangled I jumped onboard with zero hesitation.

Maggie and her siblings notice a fire in the town, and their parents just so happen to be at the town. So she makes the choice for them to run, however as the fire spreads they find themselves trapped until Maggie notices an Apache watching them. She recognizes him for her time at school and he helps them escape except her brother is not able to get rescued.

After staying at her old school for awhile Maggie goes to the town of Burning Mesa to find a job, she runs into an important man trying to escape the clutches of a rather nasty man and he offers her a job at the local saloon. Soon she makes friends with Adelaide and starts falling for a rather handsome cowboy named Landon.

But then another town burns and her Apache friend Yahn is arrested she sets out to prove his innocence. Then when Ella is injured and she runs to Alvar for help because of all the relics he owns she suddenly finds herself stuck at his house and he teaches her about relics. It turns out that Maggie has the talent to use the relics.

As she gets draw deeper and deeper into the mystery of the relics and more towns are burning Maggie begins to wonder if she will be able to find out who is burning the towns and will she be able to save Yahn and possibly Burning Mesa when the time comes?

This was a totally interesting twist on a western. Relics being exactly what you might think they are bones of powerful creatures like dragons or goblins, or unicorns and they each do different things. Like goblin relics allow you to be invisible and unicorns heal totally cool twist. I loved every minute of it even though Maggie was a bit flaky at times. Landon was great and Yahn was swoon worthy and not in the book enough.

Jeannie Zelos says

Relic Renee Collins.

ARC provided by publisher.

Wow – what a book!! It totally blew me away. I wasn't sure what to expect, I knew the book was in the paranormal genre, and thought I recalled in being classed as romance too. I hoped so because I do love a good romantic angle in my reading.

It begins with Maggie at home in what seems to be a small shack, with her brother and young sister. There's a smell of burning and they realise that they have to run to safety before their home is burned, and not wait for their parents to return from the town. There's mention of the family relic, a sort of mystical gem/fossil that has magical powers and Maggie takes it with them as its the family's most precious possession.

We learn a bit more about Maggie's background and the Relics. The world it's set in is a sort of 17-1800's wild west type scenario, with Maggie and her family scraping a living from the land, and mention of the neighbouring Apache Indians. The relics are remnants of a time in history long gone, where magic and mystical creatures lived and roamed the earth. After the biblical flood they were all wiped out, and all that remains are bones that are ground and polished and carry residuals of the magic from the original creatures. This part was fascinating, Renee manages to weave it into what reads like a slice of history as we know it, but where everyone accepts that magic is real. There are books written about relics, their different types and purpose, and there are specialists who buy and sell them. The Relics command a high price and Maggie's family paid dearly for their precious water relic, hoping it would enable them to keep growing things on their lands despite the droughts.

Quickly the main people emerge in the story, Maggie and her little sister Ella, the Indian Yahn, Alvar, a rich landowner and Landon, the cowboy Maggie is very close to. Then there are her friends Moon John, relic specialist, and Adelaide, showgirl and reluctant whore at the Desert Rose, who befriends her when she works as barkeep/cleaner there. There are others of course, but these characters make up the bulk of the story. There's magic in the way Renee weaves the legends about the Relics, the way they are mined and sought after, the way power and money control so much and cause such corruption in the search for more. We can't work out who is good and who is bad, I kept thinking I'd grasped something, and then an incident would

change my mind. I loved the way Renee describes how the relics work, the horse with ties back to Pegasus, the fire, air and water Relics, the Goblin stones that allow people to move unseen. Then there's the strange creatures, the Ghost coyote and the fierce poison spitting Rock Devils, and the banned shadow Relics which are used for evil intents. There's so much detail to take in throughout this book its one that I know I'll enjoy even more on second reading. I just love the idea of these pieces of magic from history that are used in the present. The fairy dance at the Hacienda was wonderful, where the dancers were sprinkled with fairy dust which allowed them to float in the ballroom. The descriptions of the costumes too were wonderful, and all contrasting with the poverty in which Maggie and so many others were living in most of the time. Its like reading a slice of the wild west with the addition of magic turning reality as we know it into something entirely different. Of course as well as the way the relics are used for good magic, there's the other side, the way its used for power and control, used to kill and hide evil doings. The book covers how its involved in the burning of not just Maggies' home-town but other towns, the way the Indians are always an easy target to blame. Then throughout the story there's the thread of potential romance for Maggie, but with Landon, Alvar or Yahn? Its a close run event and just when I think one is in the running for favourite, something happens to overturn that and leave it wide again. Its a wonderful story, lovely and long at 400 pages in paperback which means Renee really gets the chance to let us know the characters in some depth, their emotions and motives, and the constant struggle for Maggie of what is the right thing to do. Its a gem of a book, weaving history, reality and magic into a seamless blend of a magical, wondrous story that will remain with the reader long after its finished. One of my favourite types of books, the type where we really get to feel for the characters and even some of the "bad" ones have had excuses and motives for what they did. I loved it and that ending! Just superb, I really didn't expect that. Its a book to read to escape into another world for a few hours. Its pretty clear the story of the Relics and Maggie can continue and I'd love to read more of them once its done. Stars: well, its a cracking magical story with that gentle thread of romance twisting throughout and for me its a five star gem.

Sara Raasch says

Breathtakingly original and absolutely gripping! Renee creates a gritty, magical Western world that will make you want to start digging in your backyard for relics. I cannot rave enough about this book -- the characters, the setting, the plot, the magic, the romance. OH THE ROMANCE. The entire story is a flame of magic in and of itself!

Bonnie (A Backwards Story) says

RELIC is unlike any fantasy novel I've read before. For one thing, it takes place in the Wild West. I've never read any fantasy novel from this time period before. The use of relics composed of the bones of extinct fantastic beasts is also innovative and new, at least to me. The book is just the right length, too. I prefer my fantasy novels longer, because I lose something when they're too short. Characters, setting, world-building...*something* is always underdeveloped. RELIC clocks in at 400 pages, but it reads so fast that I could easily believe I read half that in the time it took me to devour this book. When it came to the end, I wanted *more*. Despite a full-circle ending, there's enough room for a sequel should Renee Collins choose to write one, and I already want it if she does!

Collins chooses to throw readers straight into the action from page one. Maggie has been left at home in charge of her two younger siblings while her parents went to a political meeting. The only problem? They never come home. Maggie sees fire on the horizon and riders with torches heading her way. She rounds up her brother and sister, and together they flee to their safe place. Even that is no longer safe, though, and right when they're about to be devoured by fire, a young Apache warrior, Yahn, swoops in to save the day. Maggie loses so much that fateful night, but is determined to live and survive. She goes to Burning Mesa, a local town, looking for work in a relic refinery, only to be propositioned by a shady man looking for a new girl for The Desert Rose, his seedy saloon. She refuses to degrade herself in such a place, and manages to get a job on the wait staff instead. Her visit at the relic refinery doesn't go unnoticed, however, and more eyes are watching her than she can imagine. Maggie has a way with relics, a way that people will go to great lengths to control. She finds herself in a dangerous game of survival as towns continue to burn and the truth behind her abilities begins to come out.

I love the use of relics in Collins' debut novel. Relics are created from the bones of deceased mystical creatures such as dragons, unicorns, mermaids, vampires, etc. Different shards give unique properties and abilities to their human users, and are often contained in pieces of jewelry. They are hard to come by and extremely expensive. Relic bones can also be liquified or turned into powder. There's even a scene where it is mentioned that champagne has been shipped from France packed with yeti relic ice. There's a beautiful scene about halfway through the book where Maggie is dusted in sky magic, or fairy relic powder, which enables her and other guests to float in the air for a stunning, imaginative relic waltz. Only the very rich can afford to be so impractical and laissez-faire with relics. How can I better describe relics and what they can do, since they're such a foreign concept?

Here's a quick excerpt of one of Maggie's first brushes with relics and their nature:

{Excerpt found exclusively on my blog [A Backwards Story](#)}

I've never seen a spin quite like this in fantasy before, where relics work in this fashion. I'm also a big fan of the unique setting. Who would think to weld fantasy to the Wild West? It took me a while to figure out the setting since I'd forgotten much of the book's summary going into it, and I like going into books blind. The book had a very "old" feel to it, but mentioned US cities, so I wasn't sure what time period we were in until I encountered saloons and cowboys and sheriffs. I loved the way all these historical components welded together and created a unique story. There was also a bit of a Spanish flavor mixed in, which reminds me of Rae Carson's stellar *Girl of Fire and Thorns Trilogy*, of which the final book, *THE BITTER KINGDOM*, actually shares a book birthday with *RELIC* this week. There's also the inclusion of the Apache, or the Natives, and what could have quickly become a racist inclusion was handled well and delicately in a way that gives character to this intriguing group. I hope to see a lot more of the Apache in the future, especially if those scenes include the intriguing Yahn! Yahn is a prospective romantic possibility for Maggie, as is the cowboy Landon. Romance doesn't play a huge role in *RELIC*, since the focus is on fantasy and the relics, which is a nice change of pace from other YA books out there that lose the fantasy in favor of the romance. Maggie has a good head on her shoulders, and I'm glad to see that she doesn't take boys lightly. It will be interesting to watch her grow up and evolve should Collins write more novels!

...more

flag 3 likes · Like · see review

Jun 14, 2013 Samantha rated it it was amazing

I received an ARC ebook copy of this book in exchange for an honest review

Maggie Davis led a fairly normal life until the fire. At 16, she had a younger brother and sister and parents who loved them all. She passed time by reading about relics, the pieces of long-ago magical creatures that

everyone wanted. Some were common ones, ones to help with water needs in case of a drought. But others were so powerful they could manipulate minds. Maggie dreamed of one day working with these relics when t

...more

flag 3 likes · Like · see review

May 15, 2013 Christianna Marks rated it it was amazing

Shelves: unicorn-spotting, 2013-reads, ebook, ealley, favorites, history-filled, mysteries, paranormal-goodness, road-trippin, wishlist

You can read this and many other reviews on my YA book blog [The White Unicorn!](#)

What can I say? I thoroughly adore this book! Is it odd to adore a book with so much death and magic and craziness going on? Well, if it is, I don't care, I still adore this book! Relic is the perfect book that shows when the right person puts weird elements together and mixes them up in a blender, it can turn into something magical. And yes, for your information that was a pun and it was totally intended. (the magical

...more

flag 3 likes · Like · see review

Jul 09, 2013 Meagan rated it it was amazing

I received this as an ARC

When I first started this book I wasn't sure what to expect and I'm not going to lie it took me a little bit to figure everything out. Have you ever watched a T.V. show where it takes like 8 or 9 episodes of the 12 episode show to figure out what the heck is going on? And you are just so intrigued that you have to continue

to find out and understand. Well this book was like that for me, but in a good way.

The book takes place out in the 1700-1800ish Wild West era. Maggie

...more

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Mar 09, 2013 Jessica (Jessabella Reads) rated it it was amazing

Oh my goodness, where do I start? Well, I was truly and utterly captivated by RELIC. This book truly had it all. A smart and fierce heroine, a sexy cowboy, a mysterious Apache boy, magic, mystery, and intrigue! All thrown into in a brilliantly imagined world, set in an alternate Wild West where anything can happen, and magic comes from the bones of some of our favorite paranormal creatures!

The book takes off with a tension filled scene. Our heroine Maggie Davis's entire town, including her paren

...more

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Sep 03, 2013 Faith rated it really liked it

Shelves: fantasy, owned-ebook, western, historical-fantasy

Relic is a fantastic, fun read from a talented new author, Renee Collins. The plot is fast-paced from the first page, and there wasn't a moment that dragged. For the most part the characters are vivid and realistically written, and the dialogue was western-flavored without being overwhelming. In fact, it was a serious contender for my best-of-2013 shelf.

One of the strongest aspects of Relic was the setting. The Western spin is an angle that's not too common in fantasy, and it provided a rich bac

...more

flag 3 likes · Like · see review

Jun 08, 2013 Jessica Hansen rated it really liked it

Shelves: cw-ness

Unique, and breath taking!

I'm not going to lie, this is nothing like what I was expecting, which is a good thing. As my first line states unique, that word fits this book like a glove. Blending a genuine old west setting with a magical element that keeps every character on their toes, really kept me into this book until the absolute end.

Maggie, to me, was a great heroine. Attempting to find balance after such a life shattering event is hard, but she does what is necessary while maintaining mor

...more

flag 3 likes · Like · see review

Aug 27, 2013 Heather added it

With a setting of the Old West, Relic already starts out unique. Add in the bones of mythical beings-- unicorns, people--, Native Americans, magic, and a mystery well you have truly unusual book recipe, but one that works. At least it did for me.

When mysterious fires destroy her home, Maggie and her sister are left to fend for themselves. Maggie is able to find work as a maid of sorts in a saloon/brothel. But there is something special about Maggie. She has a strange affinity with the relics (bon

...more

flag 3 likes · Like · see review

Jul 03, 2013 Ashley - Book Labyrinth rated it really liked it

Shelves: dac-2013, for-review, from-publisher, young-adult

'Relic' is a book that is magical, exciting, and unique. It completely stands on its own, not reminding me of anything I've read before. 'Relic' is a Western style fantasy, an alternate history that contains magical relics, which are the bones of long dead magical creatures. There's the cowboys and saloons you would expect in a Western, but there's also magic and magical predators.

The book is also a mystery, with Maggie trying to figure out who is burning towns and why. Maggie's parents and her

...more

flag 3 likes · Like · see review

Jun 23, 2013 Jennifer Weiser rated it it was amazing

Get ready to dive into one of the most intriguing and tantalizing reads of the summer! There is nothing RELIC can't offer you if you like a good ol' twist of magic, charming and sexy cowboys, a young and gorgeous Indian warrior with a flair for saving a damsel in distress, a sleazy boss who makes your skin crawl, a young wealthy gentlemen ready to make you an offer you can't refuse, a witty best friend with all the right moves, and the sizzling heat of the old Wild West.

Every page reveals a new

...more

flag 3 likes · Like · see review

Jun 28, 2013 Zandalee rated it it was amazing · review of another edition

Shelves: entangled-publishing-arc-review, arcs, ya-faves, young-adult

~~Relic will be released by Entangled Teen on August 27~~

I love just about everything that Entangled Teen brings out, which is why despite my lack of interest in cowboy/wild west themed novels, I chose to read Relic.

Within the first couple of pages, the story of Maggie Davis, drew me in. Right from the start, I saw the strength of this young girl and how determined she was to take care of her family.

Once I began the first sentence, I was glued to my iPad. I just couldn't bring myself to take a b

...more

flag 3 likes · Like · see review

Aug 28, 2013 Rosemary K rated it it was amazing

Relic is a very powerful story. Maggie and her sister, Ella, are the only ones to escape the burning of Haydenville. Maggie is a survivor. She will protect and care for her little sister, but her powerful connection to the ancient Relics becomes the driving force in her life. When the most powerful man in the county, Alvar Castilla, offers her his protection, Maggie takes his help. She knows there are strings attached. Will she be willing to pay the price? What is his true intention? Maggie is a

...more

flag 3 likes · Like · see review

Aug 10, 2013 Alexa rated it really liked it

Relic is a historical fantasy western - definitely not your average book genre, yet somehow it works, really well. I had heard about the book and was intrigued but wasn't too sold on the setting. After reading Relic, I'm eating my thoughts on that completely.

This book works wonderfully. The fantasy-western setting is truly breathtaking and is a great backdrop for the characters that Collins has created.

There are great scenes in this book that really move the story along and keep the reader eng

...more

flag 3 likes · Like · see review

Oct 11, 2012 Alycia rated it it was amazing

Shelves: books-i-worked-on, entangled, fantasy, historical, 2013, favorites, ya-romance, young-adult, ya-historical, ya-fantasy

Woot! RELIC has been nominated for the RT Reviewers' Choice Award in Young Adult Urban Fantasy/Paranormal!!

YAY!! It's here!!!! True Grit meets The Prestige. A seriously amazing Wild West historical fantasy. Plus, a very sexy cowboy.

Renee has a big pre-order contest going on. Lots of prizes, including a chance to win a gorgeous illustrated page from Maggie's relic almanac. Dragons, Mermaids, oh my! <http://midnightmeditations.blogspot.c...>

And like the fb page to get updates and exclusive Relic ne

...more

flag 3 likes · Like · see review

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Oct 11, 2012 Sara Larson rated it it was amazing

LOVE love LOOOOVE this book. Add it to your TBR pile asap!

[flag 3 likes](#) · [Like](#) · [see review](#)

Oct 11, 2012 Chantele Sedgwick rated it it was amazing

Love.

[flag 3 likes](#) · [Like](#) · [see review](#)

Apr 03, 2013 Melissa rated it it was amazing

I absolutely loved this book, I loved the setting and the magic mixed in it. I hope there will be a second and a third...

[flag 3 likes](#) · [Like](#) · [see review](#)

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Dark Faerie Tales says

Review courtesy of Dark Faerie Tales.

Quick & Dirty: Fast paced western with a unique paranormal twist. Amazing characters, interesting setting, and a fascinating plot makes this a must read for all YA fans.

Opening Sentence: We were home alone the night that Haydenville burned.

The Review:

Maggie Davis is 16 years old and lives in a small town in Colorado, with her family. Then one night a terrible fire burns her home and kills everyone but her and her little sister. She travels to the town of Burning Mesa where she looks for work. Maggie is lucky to find work at the local saloon as a hostess. She tries to survive and take care of her little sister the best she can. She makes some unlikely friends and meets the dashing cowboy Landon Black. But Maggie also has unusual magical skills that don't go unnoticed for long.

In Maggie's world there are talismans known as relics, which are the bones of paranormal creatures. These bones possess magic and depending on what they came from they all hold a different kind of power. For example, dragon bones contain the power of fire, goblin bones can make you invisible, and siren bones can make you very persuasive. Maggie has always been fascinated by relics and it turns out she has a special skill when it comes to harnessing their powers. Soon the very influential Álvár Castilla takes notice and employs Maggie to help him. At first Maggie is swept away in his world of finery and magic, but soon reality seeps in and she starts to wonder if she can really trust Álvár. Then another town is burned and Maggie has to try and figure out who is behind it all.

Maggie is an awesome heroine. I instantly connected with her and loved everything about her. She is strong, independent, and sticks to her beliefs. She is thrown into an impossible situation and while she does make some mistakes she tries the best she can. She has a feisty personality and doesn't like to be told what to do. Much of the things she goes through are heartbreaking, but instead of letting her problems defeat her she comes out on top. You get to experience so many firsts with her and I enjoyed every minute of it. She was an amazing character that you couldn't help but love and respect.

Okay, I have to confess something here; I am a total sucker for sexy cowboys and Landon Black is one very sexy cowboy. With beautiful blue eyes, straw colored hair and a sweet cowboy accent he pretty much had me at hello. Of course he is also the upmost gentleman like all cowboys should be and he treats Maggie with complete respect. He shows his sweet vulnerable side at times, but he is also tough and protective. He isn't perfect by all means but his faults just made him more real and desirable. His relationship with Maggie is so sweet and developed perfectly. The only thing I can complain about with Landon is that I wanted even more scenes with him in the book.

If you can't already tell, I absolutely loved this book. The setting was so much fun and the plot had some very surprising good twists. The characters were awesome and so easy to connect with. The paranormal element in the story was very unique and different from anything else I have ever read. The romance was done perfectly and the mystery kept me guessing the whole way through. This is a debut novel for Renee Collins and she has gained a fan for life from me. At the moment there isn't anything about a sequel, but with the slight cliffhanger ending, I really hope there is one. I would honestly recommend this to anyone that enjoys YA books, it has so many unique elements that will please a wide range of fans.

Notable Scene:

"Lovely evenin'."

The voice jarred me out of my thoughts, nearly making me

fling the pan of broken glass from my hand.

It was a male's voice. Sounded like a young buck, about my age. He stepped from the dark into a panel of orange light the windows had cast on the dirt. He was tall and lean with fair hair and a wide smile.

As he came closer, however, the smile faded. "Say, what's wrong?"

I realized that tears still wet my cheeks, and I swiftly wiped them away. "Nothing."

"You were crying. Are you hurt?"

"I'm fine."

He made a look of playful, exaggerated distress. "Did some varmint trample on your heart? Tell me where he is, and I'll give him a what for."

This made me laugh a little. "It's nothing like that. But thanks, anyway."

He grinned, and I felt a flicker of heat in my face. I didn't recognize him; he certainly wasn't one of the regulars. And I'd never seen him around town. He was probably one of those railroad workers, and would be leaving for Tucson at first light.

"Did you break something important?" he asked, motioning to my pan. "Is that why you're upset?"

"You really want to figure this out, don't you?" I said, both amused and exasperated.

He stepped closer. "A man doesn't like the sight of a pretty girl crying."

I tried to laugh dismissively, though it sounded more like a cough.

“I’m Landon,” he said, bending his head to try and meet my eye. “Landon Black. What’s your name?”

FTC Advisory: Entangled Teen provided me with a copy of Relic. No goody bags, sponsorships, “material connections,” or bribes were exchanged for my review.

Jessica says

Relic has been on my radar for quite some time now! I first discovered it while I was working on a Waiting on Wednesday post and decided to scroll through the GR list for upcoming debuts of 2013. I stumbled upon Relic, read the synopsis and was instantly hooked. A story set in the West of course would have your cowboys, native Indians, and rich settlers. But to add relic magic in there? Freaking awesome!

I really enjoyed Relic. From the very first page I was engaged and immediately drawn into the absolute horror that was occurring so early on in the novel. You cannot help but feel overwhelming sorrow for the main character, Maggie. Tragedy strikes her right away and at 16, she is left to take care of her younger sister, Ella. After fleeing to a nearby monastery, Maggie knows she cannot take advantage of their hospitality forever, as times are tough all around. She ventures out into the closest town and starts looking for work. She comes across Alvar Castilla, a haciendo who is both wealthy and influential. I wasn't sure what to make of Alvar first. My spidey sense was tingling and I didn't feel I could completely trust him. I think it was all of the 'flicker of expressions' that made me doubt his intentions. However, he did swoop in and save the day, providing Maggie with a job at a local saloon cleaning floors and serving drinks.

It is here she meets Adelaide, who is a showgirl, and Landon, a cowboy who works for Castilla. I really liked Adelaide, even though she was a minor character. Her situation as a showgirl is less than desirable, but she makes it work- having fallen for a cowboy named Bobby. However, Collins really shows us how little rights women have at this time and how they are controlled and manipulated by power-hungry men. Adelaide is certainly a victim of this and you can't help but just hurt for her because she longs to be with Bobby and live their lives separate from Castilla's men's power.

Landon Black, a cowboy working for Castilla, meets Maggie and you can tell he's a fun-loving, flirty character, who also has a sensitive side. He has known loss also and initially connects with Maggie that way, but he is persistent in his attentions to her. The scenes with Maggie and Landon made me laugh, because she is so proper and a bit naïve. Yet, she feels a longing for Landon she's never experienced before. I did like that Collins didn't make their relationship the primary element in the book. She did a great job of weaving it into the background to where it was present, but not overwhelming. (I will say Collins did have me flying through the pages at one point because she gave us a plot twist that I just couldn't deal with. The mantra, 'No, no, no, no- it can't be true' kept repeating through my head.)

The heart of the story is the action. Towns are being burned and no one knows who is doing it or why. They believe the Apaches are the ones burning and razing towns, but they have no solid proof. Having been rescued by a young Apache, Maggie does not believe it is them and is determined to find out who is behind it before letting innocent men die. However, after almost losing her sister, Maggie's purpose shifts to taking care of her and making sure she is happy and healthy. Alvar Castilla is there to save the day yet again and offers room and board for both Maggie and her sister at his estate. She accepts as she is willing to make the necessary sacrifices to keep her sister cared for. However, everything comes at a price and Maggie must

decide whether or not a comfortable lifestyle is worth that.

The magical aspect of the novel was really interesting for me. I like the idea of relic magic and learning about the different kinds and how it worked. Maggie is drawn to the relic revery and it is there she first meets Alvar Castilla. She is drawn to the energy of the relics and after an incident, Castilla realizes she may be more than meets the eye when it comes to relic magic. After providing her a job at the saloon and after saving her sister, Castilla insists she begin training with him, as he knows she has a gift and he intends to discover it. Even though Castilla has shown nothing but the most utmost care and kindness, you can't help but wonder if his motives are pure. Typically men like Castilla do nothing but for their own gain and power, so I was definitely flying through the pages to find out what really was going on.

Overall, I found this to be a compelling, enjoyable read. I loved how Collins used the Western setting and mentality and weaved in magic and fantasy. I do feel Collins left herself room for a sequel if she so chooses and I certainly wouldn't mind reading another book about this world and seeing how the characters fare after everything they go through in this novel. It certainly is no picnic! Maggie and her sister, Ella, have been through a lot and watching them struggle to accept their losses and move forward in a world where respectable work is scarce, is really fascinating. The two are forced to grow up faster than two girls should, but when survival is on the line, the question isn't what to do- it's what wouldn't you do for the one you have sworn to protect?

Received a copy of this book in exchange for a fair and honest review.
