



Ex-Wives of Dracula

Georgette Kaplan

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What's worse than falling in love with a straight girl? Falling in love with a straight girl who drinks blood. And not even in a goth way.

High school senior Mindy Murphy, has been questioning her small town life forever and, more recently, her sexuality. Maybe it has something to do with her new friend, Lucia West. When they were kids they used to be besties, until Lucia grew a head taller and a cup size bigger. Now she's captain of the cheer team, winner of the Boyfriend Olympics, and voted least likely to remember Mindy at their high school reunion. In short, possibly the worst person alive for Mindy to crush on. Especially after Lucia's bitten by a vampire. Now the only way to keep her alive is to get her blood, and the only way to cure her is to slay the vampire that turned her.

Who knows, maybe after they get this vampire business settled, Lucia can explain to Mindy why she kissed her.

Ex-Wives of Dracula Details

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From Reader Review Ex-Wives of Dracula for online ebook

Aj Smith says

I wanted to like this book, I really did; the basic plot is clever, some of Kaplan's writing is very good and who amongst us can't identify with some teenage angst and an unrequited crush? Unfortunately, no matter how many times I tried I just could not warm to this novel. As another reviewer has pointed out, both Mindy and Lucia have a distinct lack of redeeming qualities (I'm a firm believer in Vonnegut's 'rule' that you must give your reader at least one character they can root for), and their welfare was never foremost in my mind. Additionally the narrative style was poor, making it quite hard to follow, and in places it was just badly written with certain sections over-wrought.

Maybe I'm just too old for a high-school type book, my initial thought when I started it was that this was going to be a "Scream" style pastiche, but using vampire and lesbic clichés instead of B movie horror flick tropes, that was the book I really wanted to read.

Alex says

OMG this book was awesome. The humor, the writing, the plot! ?I laugh out loud so much it exactly my type of humor. I wasn't sure on the rating because there were some parts that didn't make sense to me or exasperated me BUT the overall was just great to me, and that ending, it felt like a movie, a good version of Jennifer's Body.

Michele says

I was very pleasantly surprised by this book. Usually when the book is trending below 4 stars, I can be a little hesitant to read it. I know, not very fair of me especially when there have been plenty of 4 and 5 star books that I've completely hated.

The MC's are both so likable. They are teenagers(17 or 18) and at that wonderful age where you're trying to figure out your sexuality. One of the MC's(Mindy)has a clearer picture of her sexuality than the other(Lucia).

I loved both of the MC's but Lucia was my fav. I loved that she was completely flawed with zero filter. She was course and vulgar yet underneath the hard shell, she was soft, vulnerable, and kind. Mash all those personality traits together with being a vampire and you got my new crush(if I was 18 of course).

The book was humorous, sweet, sexy and vampiry violent. So in other words, perfect.

4.5 stars

Arien says

4.5 stars. And, no, it doesn't really deserve that much for a lot of reasons but I enjoyed this read immensely.

The dialogue was so incredible even with some of the American high school speak going over my head. And the characters. They were both wonderful even though I hated Lucia for a long time, but she grew on me as the book went on. And Mindy is so adorkable. There's just no way you can't love her.

Now the story is a bit disjointed. It's almost two books in one - a vampire story and a high school nerd x cheerleader story. It kinda worked for me in the end but it's a weird mix for sure because it switches from one to the other several times.

The plot twists! I couldn't predict them at all and most were enjoyable with a few exceptions especially the Seb one. Mainly because Seb wasn't developed enough for me to care.

And that ending! I'm still laughing at how this book ended. A definite surprise. I'm not really sure how to feel one way or the other but it's not often that the ending is not predictable and manages to stun me. Props for that, Kaplan.

What can I say, both the vampire part of the story and high school part of the story were good. At times even great. It's worth a read if you're into paranormal books for sure.

Frank Van Meer says

This book reads like an episode of Buffy the Vampire Slayer, and I mean that as a compliment :)

Rebecca Knecht says

Ex-Wives of Dracula was, possibly, the sweetest vampire novel I ever got my hands on. I'm honestly impressed what Georgette Kaplan has done with such stereotype-riddled genres as vampire fiction and (first) romance novels. When you have a main couple with interactions this sweet, you know I'll want to read the hell out of your book:

“I was thinking that I'm not quite done being a virgin yet, so maybe we could just kiss? You don't mind just kissing me, do you?”

Lucia was kissing every tip of Mindy's fingers, every knuckle, every joint. “No. It's like someone saying you can't have donuts, you can only have all the pizza you want.” (p. 227)

When, on top of that, they're both girls, I'm completely sold. That doesn't mean that the novel sidesteps or gracefully handles *every* stereotype. Over the first 50 pages or so, I seriously doubted if *Ex-Wives of Dracula* would win me over, what with all the high school drama and allusions to vampire classics. Mindy and Lucia go to 'Millarca High' and their town has a 'Karnstein Cemetery.' *Really?* Writing sapphic vampire romance and borrowing names directly out of the currently – thanks to webseries fame – arguably most famous work in the genre seems... heavy handed. Especially when this irony is neither tied to any plot elements nor picked up by self-professed nerd protagonist Mindy, who actually quotes *Carmilla* later in the novel.

More seriously, though, I was put off by the stereotypical description of Lucia as an universally loved, universally envied, kind-of-dumb-occasionally-cruel cheerleader: “She was the woman that women hated and boys loved.” (p. 13) Yes, I understand that the ‘pretty girls against smart/good girls’ dichotomy is a distinction many young women grow up with and are heavily influenced by. I get that sometimes, fitting into these roles becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy or a defense mechanism. (Because, as Mindy articulates at some point, teenagers know what kind of experiences they ‘should’ be making – so sticking meticulously to made-up standards and throwing all standards out the window if you feel like you can’t live up to them are both legitimate reactions.) But. Endlessly repeating narrow boxes because real teens sometimes fit into them just becomes another repetition of the ‘here are the rules, stick to them’ theme. And at this point, I feel like the ‘cheerleader with a heart’ (or on the other side of things, ‘nerdy beauty discovered through makeover’, see *The Princess Diaries* for both) tropes have been overdone. So, although both Mindy’s and Lucia’s characterizations transform somewhat over the course of the novel, I would have appreciated if Kaplan had set them up a little differently.

Still, these are minor concerns considering the overall great execution of both foreshadowing and character development. In contrast to the *Carmilla*-allusions above, stylistic elements of foreshadowing are firmly tied into the text. Expressions like “The cuteness had drained out of her, leaving only sex appeal,” (p. 13) neatly work to tie the teen drama and supernatural elements of the story together. *Ex-Wives of Dracula* frequently has such moments of ambiguity, where the mundane bleeds (pardon the expression) into the fantastic and vice versa:

“[The cafeteria] was featureless except for the brick pillars that held it up, the bulletin board which shed extracurricular fliers like dead skin, and the glass doors that let the students see when a stray dog wandered onto campus.” (p. 17)

“She woke up feeling she was frying in her skin, her sweat boiling on her like grease on a hot skillet. Her sheets and mattress were soaked with it; they stuck to her like flypaper. A discarded mask of sweat lay on her pillow, lovingly revealed by the moonlight.”

(view spoiler)

Both the ambiguity of ‘normal life’ and the slow buildup of intimacy provide a great backdrop for the vulnerability, mutuality and resulting trust that mark Mindy and Lucia’s relationship. Over the course of the novel, their familiarity slowly changes character. It starts out as leftover intimacy from a childhood friendship and turns to teen intimacy forged through emotional honesty and shared unglamorous moments. Through gradually testing their own and each other’s boundaries, the two girls slowly develop their connection from there, until they arrive at what feels like a healthy, mutual relationship.

To me, this last part was especially essential. Mindy swears at some point that she “won’t even say the T-word” (p. 149) – but as a former *Twilight*-fangirl who now shudders to think back to those days, I have to draw the connection. A big chunk of what makes *Twilight* horrifying are its power imbalances and enforced roles. And given that these also seem to make the allure of vampire love stories for many people – think violent, unavoidable passion – I’m very, very glad that Kaplan does not fall into the same trap. True, there is a moment or two in which Mindy thinks of her feelings for Lucia as something “terrible [and] beautiful” (p.

203). Most of the time, though, there is no attempt to stylize romantic feelings into something supernatural, something that progresses according to rules mere individuals can't control. On the contrary, Mindy and Lucia test and negotiate the supernatural aspects of their relationship along with the more 'normal' ones – and that's the only reason why they work for them.

The most striking example in which *Ex-Wives of Dracula* contrasts with *Twilight* (I promise I'm almost done with this comparison) is how both works deal with mind reading. In *Twilight*, Edward is a mind reader and the only person on whom he cannot use his powers is, surprise, his love interest Bella. Conveniently, this establishes a situation in which he has powers he can actively use, while hers are, for large chunks of the narrative, a passive 'gift.' Edward's powers can be used on anyone (except Bella), hers work primarily on him.

Lucia, too, is able to mind-read due to her vampiric transition. However, the connection she establishes with Mindy based on this fact is instantly explored and questioned. Mindy is, in fact, able to prevent it to a degree, so huge props to the author for making consent essential within their relationship. On top of that, after exploring the power a bit, Lucia and Mindy figure out how to reverse the process, making Mindy able to 'see inside' Lucia's head. And finally, the situations in which they use their power most successfully are those in which they *both* contribute something to decision making and acting.

This mutuality and joint exploration of options is a theme that carries through all of Lucia's and Mindy's interactions. It is what makes their relationship so authentic to me. And, above all, what makes it so believable for both of them to find comfort in the other, even when they both come to a situation from very different viewpoints. They aren't magically matching puzzle pieces. Instead, they both learn how to make room for the other in their life. Little by little, from Lucia letting her 'cool girl' guard down and making a clumsy 'blood sugar rush' pun (p. 133) in Mindy's presence, to Mindy insisting that Lucia drink her blood even though they are both afraid of the consequences, they learn to fit. And the only way they manage this is by sometimes putting aside their fears, but at other times making their boundaries explicit so the other can react.

I think my favorite part of the mutual growth process the girls go through, though, is that it leaves room for a growth that is *not* for each other's sake. Yes, many of the changes they experience are due to their feelings for each other and the way they act on them. But the final breakthrough in their relationship comes not from learning to be perfect together. Instead, it comes from jointly learning that they can exist apart from each other, and still choosing not to do so.

By putting such a huge emphasis on processes of intimacy and on choice, Kaplan's novel also takes an approach to identity which I found very intriguing. She certainly doesn't portray Mindy's or Lucia's queerness as a conflict-free, light-heartedly adopted part of identity. On the contrary, Mindy's questioning phase especially is riddled with lots of painful moments. It's not only her own identity that Kaplan's protagonist questions, but also the way in which she expresses it in the process of falling for Lucia. This process of embracing a label, going back and forth between comfort and self-doubt, pride and internalized homophobia, felt impressively raw and genuine. The way Lucia and Mindy's relationship develops can't be extracted from their shared high school experience of homophobic comments, invisibilization of female sexuality and fetishization of bisexual women.

At the same time, however, Kaplan sidesteps the implication that the legitimacy of queer identities is bought through the pain individuals go through for coming out. Lucia, who spends very little time reflecting on labels or agonizing over the meaning and morality of her feelings for Mindy, is treated as no less genuinely in love than Mindy herself. Between their attraction to each other and Lucia's vampirism, the two girls spend

quite some time talking and thinking about choice, inevitability and responsibility for one's actions. But thanks to this balanced approach to identities, I wasn't left with the feeling that 'if I could, I'd change' was the sole cornerstone on which both characters' acceptance of their queerness rests.

It is worth noting that the book contains quite a few explicit sex scenes. I personally loved those, tender, occasionally awkward and still extremely hot as they are. If you're sensitive to this kind of content at all, though, it might be better to stay away from *Ex-Wives of Dracula*. There are also a number references to rape/heavily rape-culture-y dialogues. If you're triggered by those or want to avoid them for any other reason, I would suggest skipping over the following passages:

- p. 124-127: scene that seems to lead up to statutory rape (though it doesn't occur), rape threats, implications that women enjoy rape
- p. 279: implications that drunkenness and consent to previous actions make consent in the situation obsolete
- p. 288: implication that Mindy's dressing 'provocatively' indicates she wanted (and would be able to have consensual) sex with her teacher

With these possible exceptions, I highly recommend giving *Ex-Wives of Dracula* a try – whether you're a vampire and/or romance enthusiast or someone who is skeptical of both genres, you might just discover something new.

Rain says

*"You're a lesbian, you have a girlfriend. I do not think love triangle would happen."
"You don't watch a lot of TV, do ya, Seb?"*

[I requested/received a review copy from the publisher via NetGalley]

I'll begin by saying I wasn't quite into this for a while, the first quarter or so, but then the story really picked up for me and I began to enjoy it so much. It's about Mindy, an 18-year-old who while questioning her sexuality falls for her former childhood best friend/friend again/neighbor Lucia, a very popular cheerleader who's straight, and a human... though not for long.

As I was reading, I had some issues with a few insensitive comments made, especially about eating disorders, for example, Mindy saying the cheerleaders were "probably bulimic" or "a bunch of anorexics", and *"She'd never actually made herself throw up, but how hard could it be if supermodels did it?"*. I wish they weren't present, to be honest, and you could say that's a character defect, even though I don't remember any character commenting on that. In Lucia's case, known for being very outspoken, she didn't pay much attention to her word choices, even if it was mostly innocent, but other characters would respond (and I liked Mindy's dad saying at one point, *"We don't like to use judgmental words."*).

And I could complain about how unrealistic or convenient this or that was, and there was something in particular that was relevant but never explained ((view spoiler)), but I didn't take it too seriously - I don't think I was supposed to. Honestly, the book was really fun and so ridiculous at times. There were mentions of/references to Twil... sorry, the T-word, The Walking Dead, Once Upon a Time, The Flash, Lost (I'll admit this made me laugh a little: *"(...) much like Lost, this would not make more sense if it was explained."*)...

Overall, a really enjoyable and entertaining read for me with the right amount of horror, humor, and romance (and you can expect many sexy scenes). And even if I didn't at first, I really liked the characters, they were funny, quirky, and had really good chemistry.

Dialogue that made me laugh for a while: (view spoiler)

(hide spoiler)]

And I'm borrowing this one:

"That's so funny, I would hate to disrespect it by laughing."

Carly says

This was ace!! I had my doubts at first and then when scary stuff happened, I had even more doubts (plus it was scary). Then it got brilliant and funny and awesome. I'm really pleased I stuck with it. Awesome read!

Penny says

Not really sure about this one. Is it a 3 or a 4 stars? I couldn't stop reading it and the dialogue was deliciously witty, but there were several passages in which I thought the sarcasm (and the nonsense) was just too much.

Just a man's point of view says

If I'd just look at how it is written, this would have been a 5 stars.
The main characters and the dialogue are just great, the story is compelling.

This is a very original, different book. It's somehow vibrant with energy and youth, and it is *multifaceted*.

There were many moments where I found myself laughing because of the delightful wit and humour. The two girls really are fresh and funny.

Then there were really *touching* moments between them, even angsty, where I felt for them.

And there was a compelling horror story with the good, bad, monstrous, fanged vampires of old. This is no Twilight, it's a bit 'Salem's Lot.

However.

The blending of all those elements is not so succesful in my opinion. Plus, there are things I really didn't like. And, I feel bad for how it finished.

I think I can't explain myself without spoiling.

But before doing it, let me say that a funny book and a nice romance doesn't blend with the horror vibe.

Horror has elements that are the very opposite to romance ones. And that's the problem.

Heavy spoilers ahead. (view spoiler)

Tiff says

Ex-Wives of Dracula by Georgette Kaplan is very, very good. I'm talking you better hold onto your horses because this is a wild ride of awesomeness. This book is fun, crazy, interesting and oh so sexy.

Mindy Murphy is kind of a dork. I'm not being mean, this is a self-proclaimed title. She doesn't buy into any of the malarkey that is synonymous with high school. She does her own thing and she's totally secure with herself. She is biding her time till she can get out of her small town. She is above the fray of high school drama. Mindy is one of those self-aware kids that are light years ahead of her peers, she is so cool and hip, but not in the teenaged approved way, if you know what I mean.

Lucia West is the queen of Mindy's small town Texas high school. As head cheerleader, Lucia, has everything going for her. She literally has the perfect body and the perfect star football player boyfriend. Lucia West is literally living the high school dream. One thing about this character that makes her unforgettable is she is wild and crazy with a foul mouth and bad attitude.

The character development and dialogue are superb in this book. The two mains are quirky, lovable and unique. They have dialogue that is fresh and honest. I really felt like I was sitting with two teenagers. It is quite captivating how Lucia interacts with others, especially Mindy. These two have a banter that is fabulous. You can see through their interactions how their relationship is developing from friendship to something more.

Once the book establishes where it is going, Lucia becoming a vamp, hold on because this book begins to go a breakneck speed. You literally will not be able to put it down. There is so much going on, but what is never lost is the love story between Mindy and Lucia. As the book evolves, and new aspects of the story come into play, Lucia and Mindy relationship is still the main focus. It is so good, so honest and sensual, in a vampire/human kind of way!

You will not be disappointed with this one. This book is fantastic from beginning to end. Seriously this book is damn good!

I received a copy of this book by Ylva Publishing in return for an honest review.

Starsandsun18 says

This is one crazy book. I think Lucia is my new favorite vampire. Badass!

Lex Kent says

I really enjoyed this. I have a soft spot for paranormal LesFic books and always think there is a need for more good quality ones; and this book fit that bill for me. I'm also impressed this is the debut book for Kaplan. It's well written and I'd love to see a book 2.

This book is with younger characters age 18 and still in high school. I would classify this more as a NA (New Adult) than a YA (Young Adult) book. It's a bit too gritty, paranormal violence and more explicit sex scenes, than what you would have in a YA book.

The only problem I had with the book is some of the Pop references went over my head. There were quite a few of them mixed into the humor of the book. Some I got with no problem, others made me feel like a very old, 34 year-old.

I enjoyed both of the main characters. I liked seeing how they came to terms with their love for each other, and how they interacted. And the dialog between them is wonderful.

I also enjoyed Kaplan's take on the whole vamp theme. Yes some of it was the same we've seen before. But the book actually makes a joke about the similarities and I liked that. I also felt like there was enough paranormal differences, that the book seemed new and fresh enough for me. I liked how Kaplan decided not to make all vamps these highly sexy creatures. Sometimes they are a big bad disgusting monster under the bed.

This was a fun read and I would recommend it easily to paranormal fans. I'm hoping for a book 2, but will be happy to read anything Kaplan writes next.

lov2laf says

I loved this.

I vacillate on the stars but I put it higher than 4.5 so I'm rounding up to a 5.

I so, SO appreciate when an author lets their characters shine for who they are and we get to just sit with them. There were many scenes that didn't necessarily serve a specific plot point but they *did* reveal character, growth, chemistry, atmosphere...and let us, as the reader, slow down and spend our time languidly basking in the essence of Mindy and Lucia as if we were one of them. Doing so is definitely a balance in letting the characters be while not making the book appear slow or have unnecessary fluff. The author successfully achieved this balance.

What we get is raw and gritty. We feel to the depth of these characters as dark or as light as they may go...

And, yet, despite the darkness there is a ton of humor in the book, as well. The dialogue throughout is excellent and just laugh out loud funny many times. Some scenes are just absurd (in a good way). Key example being the family meeting that occurs. Just, omg, I can't even believe this was written down, awesome.

Also, kudos to the author for not slut shaming Lucia. Others in the book try to but I felt Mindy and the author herself didn't.

Let's see, other things I loved...The handling of acceptance and exploration of sexual orientation was great. I loved that Mindy always stood up for herself and, when she was angry, she let Lucia have it at the moment...

It created this super rare instance of the lead character getting upset with the other one (many times over) but the aftermath of the fights were never the focus...meaning that in many other books we'll see the leads get in a fight and then spend 50 pages afterward about what it means and will they get over it and should they have said this and the anguish and blah blah blah. Nope, not here. Blow off steam and then patch it right up. Thank you, Georgette!

The intimacy and sex scenes between Mindy and Lucia are extremely well done.

"Ex-Wives of Dracula" has action, mystery, heart, humor, parody, wonderfully descriptive language, crassness and beauty all rolled into one.

It's not a perfect book but because it had so many strengths I give it very high esteem.

So what didn't I love?

(view spoiler)

Overall, this is a really fun, unique, and heart-felt book...I don't think it's a book for everyone but it was for me.

Recommend.

Lexxi Kitty says

First of all, I received this ARC of Ex-wives of Dracula" free in exchange for a fair review.

Problems, there are many . . . (like how I appear to be an outlier and everyone else loved the book (4.21

average rating for the 28 friends who read the book; 3.99 rating overall - and then there's me, who wanted to see if I had the ability to physically rip the book apart with my bare hands), but I mean . . . with the book).

1) I despise both main characters.

-- a) 14% into the book:

Mindy - becomes hysterical and almost kills herself and her passenger because she thinks she might have hit a dog.

-- b) 21% into the book:

Lucia - both described as being really smart and gorgeous . . . says some really dumb shit.

-- c) 22% into the book:

Lucia and Mindy -

This is a really fucked up book. Mindy is at a party she doesn't want to be at (because of Lucia). Tries to get another to leave - a drunk woman (Lucia). Drunk woman pulls a pill from her sock (eww) and tells her (Mindy) to take it (ew). Dumb too stupid to live Mindy does. Goes on a drug induced trip.

-- d) 23% into the book:

Lucia to Mindy: "I'm weird. You're just confused."

Yeah, great, some homophobic shit in this here book.

2) I did not realize that this would end up being a 'I'm actually a lesbian? noooo I didn't know that . . . noooo . . .' type of book.

3) Weird unexplainable crap:

What the fuck is up with 'I'm gorgeous so I have to have an abusive dick boyfriend because it's expected.

Because I'm gorgeous.' (not a direct quote). Serious? What the fuck?

And then the direct quotes make me want to reach in and rip Lucia's throat out and gut her. Then tear her into tiny pieces. And then bury these pieces in unmarked graves all over the globe.

Mindy to Lucia - 'Why do you even want a cheating abusive boyfriend?'

Lucia to Mindy 'I don't know, maybe because I'm not a dyke?'

And this fucking . . . And this nonsense started on page one. This 'I have to have an asshole boyfriend like Quenten . . . because of how I look. How beautiful I am.' nonsense.

4) Over emotional emo crap:

First Mindy almost kills both of them because she breaks down into huge massive tears, while pushing hard on the accelerator, because she thinks she might have hit a dog. Lucia erupts at school because her asshole boyfriend, who she doesn't even want, cheated on her. Then she gets back together with him because . . . she has to. Because. She pretty. And shit like that. And pretty girls have to have asshole boyfriends.

As I noted in a status update - I want to go and buy a paperback copy of this book. Pay good money for it. So I can rip it apart with my bare hands.

5) Over writing:

Woman in the water, drowning -

'Her mouth opened, ejected her breath in a swarm of bubbles that flew around her face like bees.'

6) Confused writing:

'Something popped to the surface in front of her. It took her a moment to recognize it as a dog. This wasn't because she was complacent.'

Complacent? WTF?

It took you a moment to recognize the shape as a dog because you were not 'showing smug or uncritical satisfaction with oneself or one's achievements'? How the fuck does the word 'complacent' even work in this paragraph?

I'm so smug it took me a moment to notice that the shape was half a dead dog. I'm so bloody self-satisfied (what? you've just been floating because of deep emotional trauma, how the fuck are you now self-satisfied about your achievements or yourself?)

COME ALIVE HALF DOG AND EAT HER!!!! EEEEEAAAATTT HEEERRRRRRRRRRR!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

7) Admittedly there is some odd injections of humor - like when Batman suddenly appeared and called the main character 'unclean'.

8) And I wasn't the right person to read this book -

'She had straight girl ancestry! Really, Lucia was way out of line letting Mindy crush on her when they were both in the straight girl faction.'

--

I only made it 30% into the book before I had to stop. Though I stopped, there, because I was becoming ill from the description of the dead girl, and the creepy mushrooms, and . . . I'm beginning to make myself physically ill again.

Rating: No rating.

Finish Date: Not Finished.
