



Shade Me

Jennifer Brown

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Nikki Kill does not see the world like everyone else. In her eyes, happiness is pink, sadness is a mixture of brown and green, and lies are gray.

Thanks to a phenomenon called synesthesia, Nikki's senses overlap, in a way that both comforts and overwhelms her.

Always an outsider, just one D shy of flunking out, Nikki's life is on the fast track to nowhere until the night a mysterious call lights her phone up bright orange—the color of emergencies.

It's the local hospital. They need Nikki to identify a Jane Doe who is barely hanging on to life after a horrible attack.

The victim is Peyton Hollis, a popular girl from Nikki's school who Nikki hardly knows. One thing is clear: Someone wants Peyton dead. But why? And why was Nikki's cell the only number in Peyton's phone?

As she tries to decipher the strange kaleidoscope of clues, Nikki finds herself thrust into the dark, glittering world of the ultrarich Hollis family and drawn towards Peyton's handsome, ne'er-do-well older brother, Dru.

While Nikki's colors seem to help her unravel the puzzle, what she can't see is that she may be falling into a trap. The only truth she can be sure of is that death is a deep, pulsing crimson.

Shade Me Details

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Author : Jennifer Brown

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From Reader Review *Shade Me* for online ebook

Paige (Illegal in 3 Countries) says

See more of my reviews on The YA Kitten! My copy was an ARC I got from the publisher via Edelweiss.

Diversity Rating: 1 – Tokenism

Racial-Ethnic: 0

QUILT BAG: 0

Disability: 1 (Nikki and maybe Peyton have synesthesia)

Intersectionality: 0

I don't think any of my favorite authors have work as inconsistent in their quality as Jennifer Brown does. Two of her novels have made me cry, two have left me feeling nothing at all, and now I've been reduced to anger. Thrillers are 100% my thing and giving the main character synesthesia is a great twist on what can be a tired formula at times, but this novel just isn't good at all. Sit down with some popcorn 'cause you're in for a serious rant.

Nikki herself isn't terribly offensive as a character, but she's a poor narrator. Even with two subplots dropped completely or left for the next novel in this apparent series to take care of, *Shade Me* is overly complicated to the point of being nearly incomprehensible. She'll go on for anywhere from a few paragraphs to a few *pages* about what X piece of information means in the big picture of what happened to Peyton, but it still isn't clear half the time even with her overly verbose explanations. For instance, the family tree assembled throughout the novel is so baffling I had to actually draw it out by hand to get a sense of who was related to who in what ways.

But saying Nikki isn't offensive as a character doesn't mean she's safe from being a poor character either. She has a ridiculous amount of girl hate going on and most of those girls are caricatures that seem to "justify" Nikki's hatred. Whether she's refusing to tell police when she finds Peyton's missing car or having sex with Peyton's brother in Peyton's own bed while searching her apartment, Nikki tends to do incredibly stupid things without any effort to justify it to herself. Teens do stuff exactly this stupid, but they'll usually find a way to justify it to themselves. Nikki? She doesn't bother. She doesn't even go "okay, it's unjustifiable and I don't care."

(Entirely unrelated and with no impact on the novel's rating: Even though Nikki is written as heterosexual and has sex multiple times throughout the book, it's my headcanon that Nikki is asexual and I'll fight you on it.)

The books comes with all the twists and turns and red herrings, but it doesn't stand out much as a thriller. It does what it's supposed to down to the very last page, such as making the antagonist waste time with an evil monologue instead of shooting Nikki when they have the chance. Let's just say everyone needs a copy of the Evil Overlord List. An ending that's supposed to bring tears does nothing. Hint: very forced romance.

Even Nikki's standout trait of having synesthesia makes no sense in practice. The entire premise rests on the fact Nikki can look at a phone number calling her and know the emotions behind it. However, toward the end of the novel, she explicitly states that she can't sense the emotions behind a text she receives, including the numbers within a text.

As ridiculous and strange synesthesia is as a mental disorder, it does follow a specific kind of logic in each person. I should know. I have synesthesia, though mine is of an entirely different variety. Those afflicted will figure out their specific variety's limits and rules over time (I've got a pretty solid hypothesis about mine), but Nikki's aforementioned situation with the phone call vs. the text breaks the rules the novel tries to set up.

What synesthesia really does is take what our senses perceive and translate them into a different sense. Nikki's brain picks up on minuscule visual and audio cues and translates them into the colors she sees when speaking to people in-person. If she can't translate the emotions behind a text because those visual and audio cues are absent, she shouldn't be able to do so just looking at the series of numbers that make up a phone number. It's a book-breaking plot hole.

It hurts me to say this, but avoid *Shade Me*. There are much better thrillers out there like the Prep School Confidential series by Kara Taylor/Kara Thomas. *Shade Me* is a subpar effort from an author I know can do much, much better. I definitely won't be sticking around for a sequel since I can see another romance in the future and it isn't something I'll be into at all.

AH says

About 2.5 stars.

Synesthesia is something that always intrigued me. I can't imagine having all of my senses crossed with numbers and letters in full technicolor. In *Shade Me*, Nikki Kill (yes, that's her name) has synesthesia and it affects both her academic and social life. Nikki receives a cryptic phone call from the most popular girl in school and suddenly she finds herself deep in a mystery.

The issue I had with this book is that our main character - a high school - is investigating the assault of a fellow student on her own, without any thought to her personal safety. There were a lot of TSTL (too stupid to live) moments and I could not understand why Nikki kept avoiding the lead detective in the case. The victim left all sorts of clues that only someone with synesthesia could figure out.

The book also suffers from missing parent syndrome, thus allowing Nikki the freedom to go as she pleases. When she follows a lead and actually finds the assault scene, she stupidly contaminates it, taking items from it and leaving fingerprints.

Oh, and when Nikki investigates further and finds out that there is an escort service involved and she actually applies to be an escort? Hello? What is going on here?

This book had so much potential. I was waiting for Nikki to share her findings with the lead detective and explain how she got them. That would have been far more interesting than watching Nikki put herself in danger over and over again.

A hot mess.

Thank you to Edelweiss and Katherine Tegen Books for a review copy of this book.

Jen Ryland says

Mixed feelings. There were things I loved about this book and some others I wasn't so crazy about. Quick list now and review to come.

Loved:

The noir-ish LA setting

The overall mysterious/sinister vibe

Liked:

The fact that Nikki was a synesthete (with a spoiler-y caveat, below)

The fact that Nikki was kind of a screw-up

Though others may not agree, I liked the weird romance/non-romance that the main character had with three different guys. It kind of worked for me.

Not so crazy about:

The "coincidence" of (view spoiler)

Most of the characters were unlikeable to the point where it became an issue for me and the villain(s) got a little over the top at the end.

The inconsistent pacing -- all the action was backloaded into the very end of the book

Lisa Mandina says

Review will be on my blog, Lisa Loves Literature, on Monday, as part of a blog tour through Irish Banana Tours. I'll be talking about my favorite color, orange, as well!

Sarah says

(Source: I received a digital copy of this book for free on a read-to-review basis. Thanks to HarperCollins and Edelweiss.)

"I'm going to find out who did this to Peyton. And why."

This was an interesting mystery story, and I liked the twists.

Nikki's life seemed to be really affected by her synesthesia, but I was impressed with the way she used it to help her when trying to find out what happened to Peyton. She did take some big risks whilst investigating, but at least she had some martial arts training to help her out!

The storyline in this was about Nikki trying to figure out who had beaten Peyton and left her for dead, and

why. I liked the way the synaesthesia came into it, and I liked the way Nikki managed to follow the clues, and the twists were pretty good too!

There was a bit of romance in this, but even that got sucked into the mystery of what had happened a bit!

The ending to this was pretty good, and we also got some unexpected deaths!

7.5 out of 10

rachel says

From the moment I saw the word synesthesia in the blurb of this book, I knew that I had to pick this book up. I have been mildly fascinated with the condition since learning about in primary school but I have never had the chance to read anything from the perspective of a synesthete before. However, this may or may not have largely been the reason I enjoyed this book as much as I did. While the overall story was entertaining and engrossing, I did have a *lot* of minor problems with how the romance and plotline aspects of this story were handled.

For starters, this is one of those plotlines that had me questioning why a teenager with no police or detective training/affiliations would be investigating a crime instead of the professionals. It infuriates me when characters like Nikki put themselves in needlessly dangerous situations. The entire situation with the escort service and finding the abandoned car made me nauseated. For one, what kind of “high-class” service would employ whatever underaged girl just rang them and asked for work? Would there not be some sort of ‘interview’ or initiation process? And there is no way the receptionist would have been so loosed-lipped. For all they knew, Nikki could have been a cop! Also, why did Nikki feel the need to contaminate evidence? There is no way that can end well. Either she will now be implicated in the crime or she will have ruined the police’s chance at having physical evidence against the true culprits. It’s a lose-lose scenario - and clearly frustrated me!

The mystery itself wasn’t too bad. I was definitely invested and interested in Peyton’s situation and desperately wanted to know what had happened to her. I felt that some of the twists were done well and I was pleasantly shocked by at least one of them. The pacing, however, was appalling. It was sooo slow! To the point where I couldn’t make myself read large chunks of the book at a time because I would get bored. I felt that the overall story could have been cut down - by a lot - if there wasn’t so many lengthy yet useless descriptive paragraph or inner monologues.

This was largely due to the writing style, I think. Someone else’s review (sorry, I don’t remember who) said that Brown had a peculiar way of spending *paragraphs* detailing how every piece of information/clue related back to Peyton’s assault (which we obviously already knew because we were with Nikki as she discovered it) and I have to agree with this. Nikki would spend a lot of time recapping or thinking about how everything connected. However, all this really did for the reader was halt the pace and made the story drag out.

On top of that, Nikki was ridiculously impulsive and reckless. I found it really hard to root for her when she would constantly make bad decisions and put herself in situations that she had no need to be involved. Arguably, she *was* able to defend herself because of her martial arts training but that doesn’t trump the fact that she is a minor with no official training. She should not be messing around with people capable of

beating someone to within an inch of their life!

With that being said, I thought the action sequences were written incredibly well. They were realistic and detailed enough that I could easily visualise the scene playing out even though I have no personal experience with martial arts/hand-to-hand combat. I also liked the no one was immune to injury, even the 'good guys', and that Nikki personally kicked ass as much as she got her ass kicked.

The story's romance was too unnecessary for my tastes. I absolutely loved that Nikki was completely comfortable with how she choose to conduct her sex life but I, personally, thought that we needed more time and development in her relationships as readers. I have no judgement for people who wish to conduct purely physical relationships but I did find it hard to get emotionally invested in Nikki and Dru's relationship when even *they* weren't all that emotional about it. Does that make sense? It didn't help that I was *not* a fan of Dru in the first place. Nikki kept saying that he was more than his reputation but I never felt that we truly got to see that 'soft' side of him that she seemed to.

To add another grievance to the list, this book suffered - majorly so - from Missing Parent Syndrome. It know that's something a lot of other YA books suffer from and in cases like *Shade Me*, I can kind of see why Brown felt the need to do that. It does give Nikki the chance to get away with the reckless and impulsive behaviour we see in this story and if her father had been around, she wouldn't have been able to investigate the mystery... which means we wouldn't have had a plot. It was still annoying, however, and I wished we had the chance to explore their relationship instead.

Overall?

As much as I have complained so far, I actually enjoyed this book overall. I thought Nikki's synesthesia was incredibly well-done and it added an amazing element to the story, one which really set the book apart from the other books in its genre. There were a lot of things that did annoy me about this story, like the romance and Nikki's recklessness, but, in the end, this was a mostly entertaining read. I will definitely be picking up the sequel next year!

Review copy provided by the publisher for an honest review.

Mlpmom (Book Reviewer) says

3.5 to 4 Stars

It is so nice when you find a YA book that is not only fun but has a totally new, totally fun concept behind it, not to mention an action fueled mystery.

Synesthesia was not new to me but in truth I didn't know a ton about it and this is the first time I can remember reading about it so that was a totally new experience for me and I loved it.

There were so many good aspects to this story that were interesting and kept me turning the pages. The mystery wasn't totally unpredictable but it was a good one and still kept me guessing at times.

And while I didn't totally love Nikki, she was a bit abrupt, violent, and sometimes impulsive, I still couldn't help but like her. Even when she made some pretty stupid choices, it was hard not feeling for her. The girl

has some trust issues and as the story unfolds, it becomes clear why.

I'm so glad this is going to be a series because I really am hoping they delve more into the mystery of her mom's murder in the next book, I just know so much ties into this story and I know they are some things that Nikki has yet to learn about her family.

Overall, this was a pretty solid start to what I think will be a pretty fun, different, and somewhat original series.

ARC copy provided by the publisher in exchange for an honest review.

david y biblioflick says

So this ARC will expire in two weeks, so I decided to read it.

This book had a character who have synesthesia (which is quite uncommon in books and other media) who goes following the clues left by a caller who called her during her death and she is the only contact on Peyton's phone. Together (or sometimes) with Peyton's brother and the detective, she tries to unravel the mystery and find out her connection with Peyton.

The main character is quite alright, but sometimes when the main character find or follows a clue, she finds it out the last minute, always right, or just in time. (view spoiler) the main character falling in love with someone and ready to risk her life for someone who she barely know is one of the weakness of the storyline (especially the falling-in-love-with-Dru subplot).

I'm quite sad that this will be a series (hoping it will be a duology, since a lot of authors are exceeding three books either because their books are a hit or joining those who are a hit, but the story will be draggy and is sometimes lost and far from the intended story). But nonetheless, this book is good, and I will read the next book in the series.

Brooke (The Cover Contessa) says

I'd like to thank Harper Collins for providing me with a copy of this book to read and give an honest review. Receiving this book for free has in no way altered my review or opinion.

So a while back I read a duology about synesthesia. And I really enjoyed it. It was something new to me. Kind of paranormal but not. So when I read the blurb for this book I was completely intrigued to see where the author took this topic. Add in a mystery on top and this makes for quite an enjoyable read!

Nikki kill has synesthesia: she sees emotions as colors. Imagine being able to tell how a person is feeling because of the aura they put off. This condition overwhelms Nikki at times but can also come in quite handy when trying to figure people out. I really liked Nikki. She was very down to earth and no bones. Her sarcasm sometimes gets her in trouble, but it makes her real. She wasn't afraid to just be who she was despite the fact that her condition often crippled her in ways. The one thing Nikki fears is death, which comes to her as the

color crimson. It reminds her of a past she doesn't want to think about. A past that causes her immense fear.

Of course Nikki gets pulled into a world of deceit when one of her school's most popular girls gets between to within an inch of her life and the last person she called was Nikki. I think the thing that is most intriguing about this book is that Nikki's condition helped her find clues to solve the mystery of who hurt Peyton and why. I loved the infusion of mystery into this book. I wasn't really expecting it to be so deep and to go in such a dark direction.

There are parts that go over the top. I was surprised at just how much freedom Nikki had as a teenager. I know her dad was busy with work but I can't imagine ever leaving my teen for days without any type of supervision. And it seems like Nikki took so many unnecessary risks with herself during the book. Part of me thought she was brave while the other part wanted to hit her over the head for putting herself in such situations.

I will say that the synesthesia part got confusing to me at times. So many colors loaded into the book I wasn't always sure what she was seeing and how it was effecting her. Overall I ended up enjoying it and was surprised by some of the things that happened at the end of the book (things I definitely was not expecting). I liked the author's writing and would like to read more by her. If you enjoy dark mysteries with a hint of the "not so paranormal" you'll enjoy this one for sure!

Brittany (The Book Addict's Guide/Novelly Yours) says

Initial Impressions 1/7/16: Why do I always start out the new year with an iffy book? I was SO excited for SHADE ME because I adore creative concepts and I loved the idea of synesthesia (combining senses) helping main character Nikki solve a mystery. The way it came together though was so incredibly weird and unbelievable.

SHADE ME should have been an adult book and not young adult, in my personal opinion. Everything that happened -- trying to solve a mystery on your own, hook ups, secrets, lies, violence, bands, not going to school -- it all just makes so much more sense for adult characters. I might have been more interested if they were. I just couldn't buy that Nikki was A) doing all of this on her own B) doing it "well" and C) the lack of empathy from any one of the characters involved. It just really didn't work for me on any level.

I don't know the details about synesthesia but it felt like a stretch to extend that *so* far to the intuition aspect. I absolutely know synesthesia is a real thing and that's why I was so excited to read the book but it started to lose me when things were brought up like other characters messing with/using Nikki's synesthesia... How do they know how hers works? Only she knows what colors associate with what, especially since she has only spoken to her father about specifics. Also, someone else with synesthesia may not even have the same kind. Nikki associated colors with emotions and with numbers/letters. Someone else could have a totally different type or even if they did have the same type, they may not see the same colors/associate the same things. Then on top of THAT, the clues seemed incredibly far-fetched.

I also could not get a grip on the amount of crazy that went down, and not in a good way. These people were total characters and did not feel real at all. The situations were totally unbelievable and again, especially for a group of teenagers. Nikki's relationship with the detective had this weird sexual tension for no reason...? She is also 17 and he's at least late 20s/early 30s (I think they said 30s?) so that was just weird for me. Then there's Nikki's relationship with Dru which was a whirlwind and escalated way too quickly for me. Personal taste? Yes. But also just way too fast, way too much for me. AGAIN -- would have been more acceptable/appropriate in an adult novel and even still, I probably would have been wary of it. Anyway... This didn't really work for me on many levels and I had a VERY hard time once I hit about 40%. I

was interested and curious to see where it would go but things started taking some super strange turns and I couldn't quite get on board with it from there on.

Full review as originally posted [HERE](#) on The Book Addict's Guide 2/19/16: ** Warning! There are what some may consider spoilers for the book when discussing Nikki's synesthesia. If you're spoiler-sensitive, you may not want to read the review in full. **

I was dying to read SHADE ME when I first heard about it and I LOVE that cover! I loved the concept of synesthesia and how it might tie into the mystery! For those of you who aren't familiar with the book or condition, main character Nikki has synesthesia which means her brain essentially connects more than one sense — stimulation of a specific sense triggers a reaction to another sense. I thought it would be incredibly neat to read about and I always love learning more about cognitive functions, how synesthesia worked, and maybe also why.

Unfortunately for me, the whole integration of synesthesia in the book just didn't work for me at all. I've actually learned about it before which was what drew me to the book and so I didn't feel like the science of including this phenomenon in the book really came together at all. Grapheme-color synesthesia is the type that Nikki experiences (there are many different combinations of senses) so in her case, she associates colors with letters, numbers, and words. Each letter and number has its own distinct color as she's reading and that can extend to words as well. Where the book totally lost me was when Nikki's synesthesia started extending beyond the means of science and stretching the concept a bit too far. She also experiences an emotional connection where she sees emotions as a color as well.

While I'm sure there are emotional associations, where the book started to lose me was where Nikki started latching onto emotions intuitively. Again, I'm no scientist and this is just my speculation but some of the concepts went a BIT too far with those emotional connections for me to fully grasp them. I can see being in someone's presence and picking up on their emotions, Nikki being able to see her own emotions in color, or projecting her reactions to someone else and projecting that color onto them but she ended up connecting emotions to someone's writing instead of an actual person. How would she be able to tell what someone was feeling when they wrote something? She's not a psychic. Seeing this book scientifically, she shouldn't be able to pick up on an emotional connection from a piece of paper. And if she pulled an emotion from a photograph, wouldn't that be her interpretation of what emotion that person could be feeling and not necessarily the actual thing? That whole concept just really didn't work for me.

Then there was the idea that — SPOILER ALERT HERE — Nikki could pick up messages based on someone else's synesthesia. Without giving away too much, in a situation set up in the book, it was possible for her to find someone else with experiencing the same phenomenon... BUT even if they did experience the exact same form of synesthesia, who's to say they even see the same colors? Synesthetes may have some overlap or common colors that they might see for a certain letter or number but they definitely don't all experience the same colors for the same letters/numbers/words. The concept that Nikki was able to do all of this detective work based on her condition/ability (depending on how you look at it) could have worked but the way that it played out just didn't make sense to me. The only way it could have worked would be if she already knew what colors someone else saw because most likely they wouldn't be seeing the exact same colors.

Aside from the scientific rant, I just really didn't care for the characters or how the book played out either. Several times over the course of the book, I really felt like this would have been a much better adult book. I am all for darker YA books and not having to sugar coat things just because it's a younger character or a younger audience but it was a combination of too many things that would have been much more fitting if

Nikki were in her twenties or older. The way she goes about her detective work would have made much more sense in an adult setting, especially posing as a prostitute (what!?), an attraction quickly leading to sex, and a weird sexual tension with a detective in his 30s (even though this wasn't specifically mentioned as attraction, the two definitely had a weird thing going on). The entire concept of this crazy, messed-up family that was the Hollis situation felt more mature than a YA book. Of course, these situations really don't discriminate by age but in the real world BUT it definitely felt a bit heavy for a young adult book. I kept feeling like it would have flowed much better had the main characters been older and I wouldn't have been weirded out by so many situations which is saying a lot because these things usually don't even bother me. I think it was the combination of too many things that threw up a red flag that I just wasn't buying.

I also just really didn't connect to the characters much at all. We're so wrapped up in Nikki's sense and emotions and yet she fell really flat for me. I think part of that was because she was so detached in so many ways, which I completely understand, yet it's hard for me to empathize with characters who tend to try to remove themselves from emotional situations. I also really didn't like any of the secondary characters and so many of them felt incredibly stereotypical. They didn't seem to have a lot of depth and one of the characters who the book explored more wasn't as mysterious for me as I had hoped.

Unfortunately, I was utterly disappointed with SHADE ME. I wanted to see how the book end so I stuck it out but it was kind of hard for me to read and get into. It was a book I was really excited for since there were so many concepts I was anxious to read about but I found too many things that really made me question things. I suppose you may enjoy it more if you're not as into the science of synesthesia like I am or are willing to let the book take you where it wants, but even still, the characters and the plot didn't work for me either.

Dayla says

I'm fascinated by the fact that this already has a 2.75 rating. Must be pretty controversial for someone to already have their knickers in a twist. The last two books with ratings this low before the books even debuted that I read were rated badly by reviewers because of the controversial content...I'm more intrigued than put off now, to be honest.

Happy reading!

Sophia (Bookwyrming Thoughts) says

I received this book for free from Publisher in exchange for an honest review. This does not affect my opinion of the book or the content of my review.

Shade Me and I are completely polar opposites. Everything Nikki is, I'm not (and I'm typically against it in some way), which is an extreme rarity (and definitely not a problem). And if this is a series, I'll probably have a love/hate relationship with Nikki akin to love triangles where I love/hate both guys (and maybe the girl as well).

Anyways...

I feel Nikki's past feels like a pity party with a really rough childhood. However, it just goes with the story

because her rough childhood tells readers why Nikki is the way she is in the novel. She's afraid of falling in love (hello? I'm not a romantic, but um...), probably hooks up with guys on a weekly basis (okay...), and is close enough to flunking and not graduating – basically, she seems like a character I would probably stay away from in real life. Also, with her Tae Kwon Do (is it Tae Kwon Do?) skills, she's also just a person I would avoid messing around with.

But the coolest thing about *Shade Me* is how Nikki sees everything in color (synesthesia) and when she gets a call to identify a person in an attempted murder, Nikki uses her synesthesia to try and find the attempted murderer. The person she identifies isn't even someone she knows really well (she's heard of them because the person is the daughter of a famous producer, but doesn't know them), which I find really admirable. I mean, it's not typical a random person goes out of her way just to find out why someone attempted to murder someone she doesn't even associate herself with. She's also horrible with sneaking around – everything just backfires, but Nikki is an amazing sleuth who has extreme guts.

Overall, though? The book is about rich people problems with a dash of family drama. Brown takes something readers would typically find on daytime drama and mixes it up with something else completely different, making *Shade Me* just a tad bit different than simply “family drama.”

This review was originally posted on Bookwyrming Thoughts

Ally says

2 stars.

Shade Me had so much potential. I've devoured Jennifer Brown's books in the past and this was no exception. It was very well written. The atmosphere of suspense she created throughout the story kept me hooked so long that before I knew it half my flight home had already passed.

But that is, unfortunately, the only good thing about this story. I was surprised I disliked it so much despite being enthralled from the first page. I think this is one of those stories that I would have worshipped as a young teenager, but that has just become too predictable, obvious, and frustrating.

Here's the thing. Nikki, our main character, is pretty badass. She knows martial arts; she can kick ass. She's seen some pretty horrible things. She has synesthesia. She sees the world differently from everyone else, in colours. She is also TSTL. I don't know what it is about her character that bothered me per se. Little things bothered me, including the way she disrespected her father, her stupidity in sleeping with a prime suspect of a murder case, and her blatant refusal to talk to the police about information she had on **a murder investigation**.

And speaking of this suspect - in my opinion it was entirely obvious who at least one of the murderers was for the entire novel. It was also quite clear that this person would have had an accomplice. Halfway through the novel, it becomes quite clear who the accomplice is.

Now, a lot of her actions can probably be explained by something she experienced in her childhood. I would probably also have a healthy distrust for the police after such an experience. But that doesn't mean I wouldn't tell them what I know. It literally would have done no harm at all - she could have continued her investigation and still let the police know what she had found. Not only that, but **WHY WOULD YOU**

LEAVE YOUR FINGERPRINTS ON EVIDENCE? I don't care if the chances of somebody finding it would be slim. Put gloves on, wrap your hoody around your hand, SOMETHING. Just such quick fixes to little annoying things would have gone far in making me like her.

But the thing that irked me the most was Nikki's attachment to a murder suspect. I'm putting this under a spoiler tag just in case. (view spoiler).

Finally, there were some sub-plots that were not resolved. What about Nikki's mother and this mysterious person who might know something about what happened to her? What about the accomplice to the murder? The lack of explanation on this part left me feeling a little frustrated at the end.

So while the writing was fantastic, as usual, the story just didn't live up to my expectations. Still, everyone should read Jennifer Brown's other novels. They are amazing.

I received an Advance Review Copy from Edelweiss in exchange for an honest review.

Tonyalee says

There are a 1001 thoughts racing through my mind about this book. I can't, for the life of me, get my S together.

What drew me into this book was obviously, the premise, and Nikki's synesthesia. It's quite extraordinary yet... scary. I couldn't even imagine. So I loved that Nikki had something so different, so rare, and I do feel like her struggles are very similar to those that do have synesthesia.

Now, Nikki's character as a whole is one that I love to read, and respect. She was... Different. She has a foul mouth, is stubborn, has a serious attitude, open about her sexuality, and just does her thing. While it didn't make her character always likable, she was relate-able and real. Admittedly, I felt things were easy for Nikki when it came to solving the mystery. Maybe her character portrayed it as too easy, but I felt like everything fell into her lap.

As for the mystery itself, I thought it was well done and thought out. Sure, Nikki seemed to get the clues pretty fast, but I loved how intricate it all was. I was only slightly surprised by the resolution, simply because... well, spoilers. Part of me feels it's over the top, while another part of me finds it all to make a hell of a lot of sense.

Thoughts = Jumbled = moving on.

As far as the romance goes? Well, hmm. I wouldn't call it a romance, per se... but it's something. And YES for not having the romance consume EVERYTHING. However, I have a feeling her relationship with someone specific will develop into.. something, as the series continues. It had this weird, awkward undertone throughout the book, creating this nagging sensation that things are not what they seem.

I also applaud the ending. It's unconventional in a way that tells me Jennifer Brown is not loyal to her characters, which I love. It also opens up so much more for the next book. There are many questions left unanswered, which typically grates on my nerves, but it was well written and well done it didn't in the slightest.

All in all – I really enjoyed *Shade Me*. It may not be a read for everyone – but I do recommend it. Especially if you love mystery/thrillers with a side of unconventional characters.

I received this book for free from The Publisher in exchange for an honest review. This does not affect my opinion of the book or the content of my review.

Mlpmom (Book Reviewer) says

3.5-4 Stars!

It is so nice when you find a YA book that is not only fun but has a totally new, totally fun concept behind it, not to mention an action fueled mystery.

Synesthesia was not new to me but in truth I didn't know a ton about it and this is the first time I can remember reading about it so that was a totally new experience for me and I loved it.

There were so many good aspects to this story that were interesting and kept me turning the pages. The mystery wasn't totally unpredictable but it was a good one and still kept me guessing at times.

And while I didn't totally love Nikki, she was a bit abrupt, violent, and sometimes impulsive, I still couldn't help but like her. Even when she made some pretty stupid choices, it was hard not feeling for her. The girl has some trust issues and as the story unfolds, it becomes clear why.

I'm so glad this is going to be a series because I really am hoping they delve more into the mystery of her mom's murder in the next book, I just know so much ties into this story and I know they are some things that Nikki has yet to learn about her family.

Overall, this was a pretty solid start to what I think will be a pretty fun, different, and somewhat original series.

An ARC copy of this was provided by the publisher in exchange for an honest review.
