



Spellbound

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What's a girl to do when meeting the one' means she's cursed to die a horrible death?

Life hasn't been easy on sixteen-year-old Emma Connor, so a new start in New York may be just the change she needs. But her new posh Upper East Side prep school? Not so much. Friendly faces are few and far between, except for one that she's irresistibly drawn to — Brendan Salinger, the guy with the rock-star good looks, who is also the richest kid in school.

Even when Brendan inexplicably turns cold, Emma can't stop staring. Ever since she laid eyes on him, strange things have been happening. Streetlamps shatter whenever she walks by, and Emma's been having the oddest dreams. Visions of herself in past lives — visions that warn her to stay away from Brendan. Or else...

Spellbound Details

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From Reader Review Spellbound for online ebook

Wendy Darling says

The beginning of this book is pretty good. There's a little bit of set up that explains Emma's nervousness over attending an exclusive school in a new city, plus some funny one-liners that make her seem pretty likable. But on page 15, Emma meets Brendan and everything goes downhill from there, because her whole life, including the scant paranormal aspects of this book, then revolves around getting him. Here is a sketch of the story, with some spoilers.

Here's what we know about the main characters:

The Girl

Emma is a high-school junior who lives near Central Park. She likes Brendan. *A lot*. Immediately after she meets him, she starts obsessing over everything he says and talks about him with literally everyone she knows. When he blows hot and cold, she gets upset. She feels "absolutely crushed" when she walks into a classroom and he's not there.

Emma likes music and she likes to run. (This *might* be a metaphor.) Her daddy left when she was six and her twin brother died when she was fourteen. Then her mom got sick but found a boyfriend to marry so her daughter wouldn't have to be alone. Emma doesn't like to drink because she was in a car accident with her drunk step-daddy, which is why she's now living with her aunt, who gives her money and doesn't set a curfew. Emma is embarrassed by all this so she lies to everyone about where she came from, although she actually doesn't seem very upset that her entire immediate family has been wiped out. **None of this actually has anything to do with the story** except that it explains why she is living in the most expensive city in America without a whole lot of adult supervision.

Because she has a necklace that has the same symbol as something Brendan owns and has a couple of weird dreams, Emma is sure that she and Brendan are soul mates who have been searching for each other for 1000 years. Seriously, *1000 years*. But her dead twin brother occasionally pops up and makes the lights go out and warns her that their relationship is cursed. This really, really sucks, but her boyfriend is hot so there's got to be a way to make it work. Oh! And she might also be a witch. Her witchy schoolmate looked up some information online and said so.

The Boy

Brendan lives in a multi-million dollar home in Manhattan, where he has an entire floor to himself. He is "spellbound" by Emma as soon as he sees her. He is awesome because when they're out, he only does a couple of shots and then drinks water for the rest of the night so that she doesn't feel uncomfortable about only having one beer. He gives her his hoodie when it's cold, which is the sign of a true gentleman. Brendan is also a deejay (cool job) and he buys her a diamond Claddagh ring (generous guy) and picks her up in a limo (generous guy with style). When Emma feels insecure about the sneering, baby-pink-gloss-wearing Kristin who's after him, Brendan says "Emma, don't even compare yourself to them. It's like comparing a diamond to...I don't know...a booger." He's also really suave.

The Summary

This is essentially a book about a girl obsessed with a boy with some convenient "story-enhancing" paranormal elements thrown in. There are cartoonish teenage villains, friends who appear then disappear never to be seen again (and there is no witchcraft involved!), girls who are called sluts, and a drunk, conceited boy who tries to rape girls and hits people, then yells at them for not cooperating.

There's also off-kilter adult behavior, repeated references to the title of the book, some really odd mentions of Martin Scorsese (which I'll give you, but...it's weird to also mention Thelma Schoonmaker later on for no reason), an eye-rolling climax straight out of a television movie, and most mystifying of all, the assumption that \$20 will cover a night out in New York.

If you hadn't already guessed it, in a book like this, whether your crush is ignoring you or whether there are unworthy people trying to get in your pants or whether there are Twilight Zone forces trying to keep you and your boyfriend apart, love will totally conquer all. After all, that's pretty much the whole point of being alive. And definitely the whole point of being a woman.

The full text of this review may be found in *The Midnight Garden*. An advance copy was provided by the publisher.

Katie says

I'm generally not a fan of plots that involve (1) starcrossed lovers, (2) reincarnated lovers, (3) witches, or (4) any combination thereof. So I'm not sure what I was thinking when I picked up *Spellbound*. Maybe because I have been so pleased in the past by books published by HarlequinTeen that I thought they could do no wrong. I mean, they published *The Iron Fey* series, *The Goddess Test*, and *The Girl in the Steel Corset*, and I really liked all of those - so I guess I was hoping this would be similar.

I should have been suspicious when I saw that the blurb capitalized "the One."

I don't know how I feel about "soulmates" in real life, but I'm willing to suspend belief for a book. But the soulmates aspect in this book really was excruciating. I just wasn't on board with any of the plot. I'm sorry. The witch aspect wasn't interesting. The medieval legend that was the basis for Emma and Brendan's relationship was archaic and tired. And the reincarnated lovers plotline was clichéd.

In fact, everything about this book was clichéd. I couldn't stop rolling my eyes throughout the entire book. This book was so formula fiction, and I couldn't help but cringe. I don't mind a little formulaic construction. Pretty much every paranormal romance follows a basic outline. But this one stayed so rigidly to the outline that I was thirsting for some creativity.

You have all the "necessary" elements of a teen paranormal romance here:

1. The "plain" heroine
2. The impossibly hot hero
3. The mean girl
4. The gay best friend
5. The starcrossed romance
6. The evil man who wants to keep the hero and heroine from being together
7. The paranormal twist

I so wanted to love this book. It's from HarlequinTeen. It's a standalone book. It has a sick cover. But unfortunately, it was just "meh" for me. I wish Emma had been less mousy and Bella Swan-ish. I wish Brendan had had a better name. ("Brendan" = not hot!) I wish Brendan had been less cookie cutter and washboard abs, and more developed. And I wish there had been some real chemistry in a book that claims to be a romance.

I'll give the book one thing: the climax was pretty interesting. I read the last 10% pretty quickly, once I had slogged through the first 90%. All the plotlines were tied together nicely at the end. And this is a standalone book, which I loved. Seems there isn't enough of those in YA these days.

But this book wasn't for me. I give it 1 star for the Alice in Wonderland-esque cover and 1 1/2 stars for the actual story.

Meh.

Cory says

What's a girl to do when meeting The One means she's cursed to die a horrible death?

Life hasn't been easy on sixteen-year-old Emma Conner, so a new start in New York may be just the change she needs. But the posh Upper East Side prep school she has to attend? Not so much. Friendly faces are few and far between, except for one that she's irresistibly drawn to—Brendan Salinger, the guy with the rock-star good looks and the richest kid in school, who might just be her very own white knight.

But even when Brendan inexplicably turns cold, Emma can't stop staring. Ever since she laid eyes on him, strange things have been happening. Streetlamps go out wherever she walks, and Emma's been having the oddest dreams. Visions of herself in past lives—visions that warn her to stay away from Brendan. Or else.

Is it just me, or does this sound like Twilight?

Poor Emma, she's transferred to a prep school. Am I really supposed to feel sorry for her? And she falls for the richest, hottest guy in school. And he falls right back. But he's dangerous and she has to stay away from him. Oh, and we have a splash of reincarnation. Is this Fallen, Evermore, or Twilight? Perhaps a combination of both.

Idiot girl meets brooding handsome rich boy. They fall in-love, but he's dangerous. They soon find out that someone wants to prevent them from being together. They fight said person and win. Then we introduce the other element of the love triangle in the next book. Note, it's never the guy who has to choose between two girls. Our plain heroine is always plagued with making a decision between two equally hot guys. Yawn.

I'm not reviewing the book, hence I haven't rated it. This is strictly for the blurb. I suppose books like this weren't written for people like me.

Krystle says

Boy, this book started off so well... And then it crashed and burned in a smoldering fire.

The beginning of this book was fabulous. Emma is sarcastic, humorous, and snarky without overdoing it. I love how she doesn't take any of the mean girl's crap and spits it back in her face. There was this nice, subtle build up to the other magic plot and a sort of suspense about these cryptic warnings being delivered by her brother.

But after 100 or so pages, it took a turn into gag me now, shitville. This is when the romance kicked in and omg, could it not get any more annoying. I don't know about you but I really hate the whole: "I have to stay away from you because being with you is dangerous/I don't understand/something is going on here" type of overdone plot device. It makes the guy seem like a prick and ugh, the amount of emo angsting you get from the main character is enough to make you want to scream in her face to stfu.

And then we get into the whole soulmate business. Don't get me wrong, I'm sure this concept could work if handled carefully and adeptly by a competent writer, but it doesn't here. Not to mention the whole plot set up is eerily reminiscent of *Fallen* by Lauren Kate. You know the whole, "If we get together, she'll die!" crap. No thanks!

The romance sucked. It was okay at first because she had a normal crush but then they were so sappy and head over heels with each other. I'm not too sure about you but I'm not going to be all "You're my one and only!" after going out for about a week with the guy. They only knew each other for a month tops, brief childhood moments aside. Rich or not, buying some girl a diamond and sapphire ring during this time is CRAZY. I would be all "Wtf! I ain't that serious about this relationship!" Freaking what! I'd think the guy was a bit too gung ho and diving in things way too hard. Yech.

I really hate how there always has to be one popular girl set out to make the new girl's/protagonist's life miserable. Ugh, please. Can we get past this cliché? Thank you very much. I'm so sick of it. Don't even remind of how the villain is some prick ass guy who tried to force himself on Emma's cousin and then the mean girl still takes his side and wants to be with him. WTF. HELL NO. This is wrong! Wrong, wrong, wrong! And the way he is so one-dimensionally set out to get his payback after Emma had put him in his place and got him the punishment he deserved after his asshole antics.

Yuck. I am not a fan.

This book could have been so much better. I'm disappointed. I bet a lot of people would like this if they like simply done young adult books revolving around a doomed love angle.

Carla says

Well!!!! This book was great ♥?. Emma and Brendon were definitely Spellbound and it was a super cute love story with a Medieval twist to it.

Emma comes from a very sad and dark past and moves to her Great Aunt Christine's in downtown New York. Where she goes to Vince Academy with her 14 year old cousin Ashley. There's your school normal and psychotic drama with who's this and who's that. And then she meets Angelique and helps her adapt at this posh school. Angelique is also very spunky and funny and can see auras. She helps Emma find about

about the medallion she's wears around her neck and the real reason to why she has a insane connection with Brendon.

Hahaha oh Brendon, that's kid made me blush a few times. He was your typical: strong, fast, smart, funny, deep and mysterious guy with..... wait for it.... EMERALD GREEN EYES

Kassiah says

Again with the half stars lol. I'd give this 4-1/2 :)

So lately I have been complaining a lot about stories that, because there's sequel coming, end abruptly and don't seem to finish the storyline at all. I hate to be left hanging in an evil cliffie.

And that's why I love this book.

It reminded me of *why* I beg for more when there's something awesome. As far as I know, there is no sequel planned, but I want one. And not because the storyline wasn't wrapped up--it was. But I want MORE of them. More of swoon-worthy Brendan who brushes the bangs out of Emma's eyes. More of Emma, the perfect combination of feisty and fragile. More of her friends and her cousin and even her school. I really want more.

I liked the mystery and the pacing and the plot. The action was, um, action-packed and I cannot say how much I loved all of it. Both Emma and Brendan's personalities were likable. I love that Emma isn't a typical "damsel in distress". I loved that after taking some time to figure out what he wanted, Brendan was all in. Though the circumstances that surrounded them being together were the basis of the plot, their chemistry didn't feel forced or fake to me. (view spoiler)

I've seen some of reviews that categorize this book as a lighthearted romance, and while it is definitely romantic, I don't think it was very fluffy. There are certainly dark issues and situations, but the characters respond to them in a realistic way.

I want to kick myself for waiting to read this. After wading through some less-than-stellar books lately, I found *Spellbound* refreshing and just fantastic. I will be the first in line for this book if Cara Lynn Schultz decides to continue. I highly recommend!

Cayla Kluver says

The moment I knew *Spellbound* had me hooked was when the main character, Emma, compared the smell of a perfume to "a unicorn fart". Later on, the same perfume was described as "munchkin sweat". These are clear indications of brilliance.

(FYI - THERE WILL BE MILD SPOILERS AHEAD.)

First let's talk about Emma. What I loved about her was that she's been through a hell of a lot, but she's not your typical world-weary protagonist. She definitely wants a better life, she wants a chance to start over. She

hasn't given up. I adored her defensive cynicism, because it fit perfectly with what she's lived through. I loved that she would go to school without doing her hair and makeup (that's what I always did because nobody can look good that early in the morning anyway), and I loved that her habits on that front didn't really change after she got involved with Brendan. Emma has a "this is what I am, this is as good as it's gonna get" approach to her appearance, which is refreshing.

Brendan is a delicious bad boy with uber respect for women. I'm not going to talk too much about him because you guys should get to discover him on your own as you read. But I heart him (and so does my friend who started reading the book before I'd even finished it).

The ending of *Spellbound* was riveting. (This is where things get a bit spoilery.) As a young woman, I found Anthony to be a terrifying character. The way that Emma refers to him as "the monster" is so accurate in terms of how many women are forced to look at the world. If I see a group of guys on the sidewalk, I cross the street so I don't have to risk passing by them. I don't walk to my car by myself. I don't go to public bathrooms by myself because public bathrooms are a high risk place for women to be assaulted. And Anthony embodies every little thought and experience that urges me to make those decisions regarding my safety. I would venture to say that *Spellbound* is a good read for young women, but especially for young men - it's so important for guys to understand the ways in which women are forced to view the world differently from them. And *Spellbound* illustrates this perfectly.

All in all, this is a great read. Either for tanning by the pool or for intellectual discussion. There are layers to it and it can be enjoyed on myriad levels.

Buy this one, ladies and gents!

Darkfallen says

There is so many things that I absolutely loved about this book! So first off I would just like to say Way To GO! for Cara Lynn Shultz on a job well done:)

I only had one slight issue with the writing. Nothing major. So let's get that out of the way and move on to the awesome sauce. My only complaint is that I felt it could have used some better editing. And here is what I mean by that. *Note this is just a example and not an actually sentence from the book.*

"I saw the most perfect silky, smooth black dress through the glass window of the store. I ran inside to try on the silky black dress, and it fit perfectly. So perfectly that I couldn't believe the way the silky black fabric clung to all the right places."

Ok have you figured out what part bothered me? If you were to guess it was the over use of the same descriptive words (*silky black or even perfectly*) you would be right. I would just like to state that I get it...I do. When I write it happens to me all the time! Then I go back through it, try to catch all of my repetitive words and fix them. Then I let someone else read it and it never fails they always find more! Lolz. That is just what happens when you get into your groove and you pound out 2,000 words in a sitting, but I just wish that someone would have caught more of these. I will say that towards the end there were less and less of these mistakes;)

Now on with all that is awesome!

I absolutely adored Emma. There simply isn't any other word to describe it! She is smart, funny, witty, snarky as all hell, and most importantly not only can she handle her own, but she will stand up for what she believes in. Even if that means picking a fight with a guy twice her weight! LOLZ I also love how Emma seemed to be a constant battle with herself, and with the new broken version of herself. With the tragic loss of her mother and her brother she has been through a lot. Losing the people you care most about is a sure way to make a girl grow up too fast. But even though inside Emma knows that the world is a complicated, and ugly place; even though she has been left jaded by the hand life dealt her...she is always reminding herself that NOT everyone else her age has. She does everything in her power to protect her little cousin from learning these things. Which makes me love her more.

And then there is Brendan...

swoon

Wow this boy had me at *"I heard she asked him out, he laughed in her face and peaced out. Like he gave her the peace sign and walked away."*

I mean seriously any teenage boy that would do that to the most popular girl in school is alright in my book! And don't even get me started on how swoon worthy he is once you actually get to know him. The way his and Emma's relationship grows is perfect. And I don't mean perfect, love at first sight, now they are inseparable. I mean more like *why does she make me feel this way so I am going to run away* kind of way. It was refreshing and REAL that they didn't just instantly jump into some huge serious relationship. I enjoyed watching them tip toe and dance around each other and when they finally stopped the dancing around the love you felt was amazing.

And the best part about all of this was these teenagers actually acted like teenagers!! Which is rarer and rarer in YA these days. I mean they got in trouble, they never cleaned their room, they forgot to do their homework, they had snarky teenage fueled fits...all of it is what makes this book stand out!

Overall this was a great book to debut Cara Lynn Shultz and I can't wait to see what she has up her sleeve next!

Heidi says

“Three and a half stars: A novel with a curse, star crossed lovers and more.

Three and a half stars: A novel with a curse, star crossed lovers and more.

Emma survived a rough couple of years. She lost her twin brother and mother in two years time. She was left living with her drunken stepfather, who nearly killed her in a car accident while driving drunk. Thankfully, her Aunt Christine, who is a recent widow with no children, takes her in and turns Emma's life around. Emma moves to New York and is enrolled in a prestigious, private school for her junior year. Emma dreads being the new girl in a small, wealthy school. At least, she has her plucky fourteen year old cousin, Ashley. On her first day, she immediately draws the attention of the resident mean girl and the pretty boy, who thinks his ass is made of gold. Her rebuffs don't allow her to slip under the radar. Thankfully, she does make some new friends. She settles into her English class, and in strolls a handsome, tousled bad boy with glittering green eyes. Brendan. Emma is immediately drawn to this boy, but after their initial meeting he ignores her. That doesn't stop her from drooling. A few weeks into the school year, some inexplicable things start happening. Street lights go dark when she runs by and she feels as if something dark is following her. Then

bad dreams start haunting her, visions of dying over and over but as someone else. She finds the same crest that is on her charm necklace in Brendan's locker. Why is she drawn to this boy? Is something after her? Is it possible to have past lives?

What I Liked:

*I was pleasantly surprised by this book once it began to unfold. This story moves a bit beyond the typical high school romance. It starts with an instant attraction between Emma and Brendan, but then it cools off when Brendan disengages and becomes aloof. Now, I know some reviewers have complained about this seemingly being an insta love type relationship, but I didn't see it that way. First, they are attracted but then Brendan withdraws, and you are left guessing, along with Emma, as to his true intentions. Once the author reveals the twist and you see why they are drawn together, well things heat up and start to sizzle. Truly, this really isn't an insta love, love at first sight type of romance, there is much more to it than that, and I can't say much without involving spoilers. Let's just say it involves some magic, old legends, curses and a great love. I honestly enjoyed the relationship between the two.

*I liked both Emma and Brendan. Emma has dealt with a great deal of sorrow in her life, but she doesn't let it consume her. She moves forward. I liked that she was a bit insecure and felt awkward around Brendan. She is also a bit sassy, which makes some of her lines fun and memorable. I admired that she was courageous and willing to take a stand against the bullies, even risking a physical attack when she defends her cousin.

Brendan on the other hand, is a bit of a mystery at first, he is a handsome (a hot mess) like-able bad boy. As the story progresses, his layers peel back and he has a lot of depth, he then becomes very swoon worthy.

*I enjoyed the various twists and turns, as well as the surprising inclusion of some super natural elements. A book that starts out as your typical teenage romance filled with high school drama, evolves into something far different than I expected.

And The Not So Much:

*This book is slow going in the beginning. The first third of the book reads like a traditional YA high school romance, girl meets smoking hot guy, sparks fly, boy ignores girl leaving her second guessing, enter mean girl and mean guy, more drama and then once the book hits the two thirds mark, the story picks up when some big stuff is revealed, and it transforms.

*One of the characters, Angelique, remains much of a mystery. She and Emma become friends. Angelique is all about shock, as she is the school's resident witch. This character is so fun, but she is not developed. She just flits in and out. Finally, at the conclusion of the book, there was a short excerpt from Angelique's point of view, and wow! It was very revealing, to say the least. It made me wonder why this side of her wasn't shown in the main story.

*Another character that I wanted to see more of and learn more about was Cisco, he immediately becomes Emma's friend and confidant. Then during the latter half of the book, he just fades out and is hardly present. I really enjoyed him and I wished that he had stayed in the picture.

*Sigh....this book includes a very nasty mean girl and boy. Why do we have to have so many of these characters? I absolutely detest the entire bullying/ mean kid theme. At least in this book, our main characters, Brendan and Emma stand up to the bullies.

*Toward the end of the book there is a big reveal regarding Emma's heritage and her abilities, I won't say anymore to alleviate spoilers, but this exposure did not flow well in the story, is just felt like something that was thrown in, and it wasn't thoroughly explained or explored. I am guessing this will be a theme in the sequel.

*Emma's twin brother, Nathan, is already deceased when the novel opens. However, he is still an integral part of the story. I would like to have had more insight on him; what was he like? Tell me more about the bond between he and Emma, etc.

Spellbound was a surprisingly fun read. This book takes a seemingly typical teenage attraction and turns it upside down, with some mystery and a pair of star crossed lovers. Brendan and Emma are both great

characters and together they have electric chemistry. Beware of the mean girl theme, but luckily this is a book where the protagonists rise above it. If you are looking for something that steps outside the typical YA storyline, plus it lacks a love triangle and cliffhanger, big bonus points there, give *Spellbound* a try. Look for the sequel, *Spellcaster*, March 27, 2012.

Favorite Quotations:

"I knew that juniors did not hang out with the lower classes. It was like hanging out with a bunch of vegetarians and wearing a bacon necklace."

"The slick smile was back on his face as James Blond spoke directly to my shirt's third button."

"I'd always heard the phrase 'mentally undressing someone with your eyes' but never had I actually seen it in action. This dude's eyes could perform a freakin' CAT scan, they were so thorough."

"She was a little waterfall, overflowing with good cheer."

"The rest of the weekend seemed like a never-ending ocean of time"

"The pathway was velvet dark, the only illumination coming from Queens, across the river."

"That's because girls are evil," I muttered. "High school girls are demons, seriously."

"I had all the warning signs---and yet I'd run into danger's welcoming arms and given it a kiss."

Originally posted @ <http://rainydayramblings.typepad.com/>

Jessica says

Honestly, I don't have much to say about this. The story didn't trigger any strong emotions on my part so whenever I try to come up with something to say about it I'm drawing a total blank. The weird thing is, those of my friends who've read it, rated it somewhere between 1 and 5 stars (haha). Opinions seem to be somewhat varying ;-) Well, I for one, enjoyed this and was actually quite surprised because I didn't expect to like it as much as I did. It wasn't anything overly special but it was pretty much the same as with *Ripple*; the story kept my attention and the romance was cute. Brendan was exactly my cup of tea, to be honest. ;) So while this didn't blow me away I certainly had a good time with it. A decent read.

Megan says

How, oh how did this get published? Actually, I know how... it's called the Twilight effect. Look, there are bad books exploding off YA bookshelves everywhere. Ordinary Mary Sue's with *speshul* powers, gay best friends, bitchy popular girls and jerky jock guys, sadly that all ain't nothing new. (Oh god, and there go my vocabulary skills...) But we can thank Twilight for the popularity of insta-love novels. Forget books with heartbreakingly real romances or painful crushes or clumsy attempts to find the right guy. **Spellbound** presents us with a ready made romance. (view spoiler) Spare me. I remember those highschool days... what girl doesn't wish for her romance to be so serious, so special, so *important*. But we all know it's just not like

that, right? (According to **Spellbound** wrong!) Despite hormones and chemistry, somewhere along the line you learn that real love, romance and partnerships start with friendship. Not just, "I have such intense feelings for him!" Well, yeah... I have such intense feelings for Simon LeBon but that doesn't mean that we are *meant* to be together. (Although really, we are!)

sigh *My True Love!*

But the lesson learned in **Spellbound** is that twu-luv-forevah is something you have, or you don't. No work required. No friendship required. Even more pukey is that when the subjects of this icky insta-love get hot and heavy, the dude pulls back and says,

"Just because you're my soul mate doesn't mean I should rush things with you," he whispered in my ear, softly kissing the spot under my earlobe. Keep going, rush things! my body screamed, but my head nodded in agreement as tried to pull myself out of his kiss-induced haze. Somewhere in my mind, I knew he was right. "Actually, *because* you're my soul mate, I shouldn't rush things with you." His lips tickled my skin as he spoke. "No matter how badly I want to."
"So," he continued, pulling his laptop over and opening a food-delivery website,. "What are you hungry for?"

Erm...doesn't the argument frequently work the other way? "C'mon baby, we were meant to be together you gotta let me...."

But it's not just the romance gone horribly wrong. This book is filled ridiculous one liners such as,

"...my [sprained] ankle was blossoming into more shades of indigo than Picasso had used during his blue period."

"My eyes were as big as the fresh-baked bagels piled in the breadbasket when I saw the prices on the menu."

"I had to hand it to Brendan; his kisses were a better mind eraser than that magic wand thing from Men in Black."

Those zingers (sorry, even the word "zinger" makes me cringe) were on practically every other page. To the point where it is not witty, amusing chick lit. It is poor writing and lazy descriptive skill. In addition, there were so very many pop culture references... YouTube, Facebook, Google, contemporary movies and music. I can't tell if the purpose is to sound hip? Relevant? Conversational? To me it sounded as if it will soon be quite dated, and again simply a replacement for poor writing skills.

Reincarnation and fate and destiny are subjects which could, *could* be the building blocks for an amazingly cool book. But must they always end in a HEA and love defying all? (Cry spoiler, I dare it! Tell me you didn't see that shit coming from page one!) There are a myriad of unexpected twists and turns and possibilities without choosing the most obvious pathway.

And don't even get me started on the ~~lame~~ laziness of the unraveling of this mystery. Emma just happens to have a friend who just happens to be a witch. (And not one of those fake witches either, a *real* one, with real knowledge.) The key to the mystery just so happens to be available in an easily obtained "ancient" book. Ugh, so bad so bad.

After a few drinks my review has spiraled into an unorganized bitch fest, so let me stop here. Bottom line, I finished it because I am so horribly behind on my Goodreads yearly reading challenge. This story was not original, interesting or thrilling... pass it by!

Danny says

Oh my this book was a wonderful surprise! I adore the story and most of all, this seems to be a Stand-Alone, no cruel torture cliffhanger end where you have to wait a year for an update! I read and finished the book in only one day, I couldn't stop once I started with this beautiful story of soul-mates.

This is the story of Emma, who couldn't have had a more horrible life. She lost her mother and her twin brother Ethan and her step-dead was a drunk that nearly got her killed. This is why she moves in with her aunt who is fairly rich and sends her to a precious school in New York. All Emma wants is to stay hidden and not let anyone close to her. She couldn't bear losing again someone. But, what you wish and what you get are two different things!

The instand she lays eyes on Brandon she's in awe. He looks rock-star gorgeous with his black hair and blue eyes but keeps everyone at a distant as if he wouldn't want something to do with either of the kids at school. But, he's looking back at Emma and she has a feeling he's as intrigued as she is. But, she can't figure him out in one minute he seems interested in the next he's avoiding her. But Emma can't stay away from him, she simply can't...

There is something between them that neither of them can't deny!

Emma was a wonderful, wonderful character! Vulnerable, sweet and still brave when it comes to defend her little cousin. Also, she's sometimes so awkward when talking to Brandon that it made me simply smile! Who doesn't know how it is when you have a huge crush and can't seem to form a normal sentence! So sweet and so very real!

Brandon was swoon worthy and had the perfect mix of bad boy and sweetness. He stands up for Emma and ready to beat the shit out of the real bad boy, but is tender and lovely when he is with her. Honestly he's the perfect boy to have a crush on. Exactly what I love in fictional character.

But their love is cursed and they have to find a way to be together and break a ancient curse that lays on them.. Will they ?

Captivating beautiful and haunting story about finding a away to break a curse to be together forever with your soulmate! Wonderful real and genuine characters and especially a boy that makes you swoon and fall in love with as easily as Emma did!

~Tina~ says

After losing her mother and her twin brother and then having to endure a sorry drunken excuse for a step

father, Emma Conner finally gets a fresh start in NY, living with her Aunt Christine and starting at the Vincent Academy school with her younger cousin, Ashley. Meeting the new kids at school isn't the easiest as Emma already gets a taste of what some of the kids are like, but she also meets some genuinely nice people and then there is Brendan, the one who looks like a rock star that Emma seems to be drawn to the most, only there is something very mysterious when it comes to Brendan Sulinger, something very...undeniable.

Wow, this book really surprised me in the best way possible!

To be honest I wasn't sure if this book was for me since the flow was kinda off in the beginning and the dialog was a bit silly and awkward at first. But! After reading a few great reviews I wanted to give this book an honest go and I'm really glad I didn't give up. Once the story started to unfold, I was completely mesmerized with Emma and Brendan.

I really just loved this concept. Always was a sucker for reincarnation and soul mates stories, so when you add a curse into the mix, what more could I ask for?

Spellbound is a intriguing book filled with the sappiest kind of love story that made me gush like a little girl at that kind of romance, but it also had some dark moments that added just the right amount of excitement to the plot.

I thought all the characters were great. Ashley is a cute kid, naive, yes, but cute none the less. Angelique is really cool and I liked what she brought into the storyline. Cisco is a great buddy even though we didn't really see much of him the second half of the book. Anthony is a total creep/jerk/slim-ball while Kristin was your typical rich b!tch mean girl. Both were equally easy to hate from minute one and did a fantastic job as our villains. Our protag, Emma, is awesome! She's a survivor, brave, strong, sweet and kind and I love that she stands up for herself and the people around her. Then there's my Brendan who I absolutely loved. His on-again-off-again attitude in the beginning tended to frustrate me, but once I understood the why's, I got it. He's such a solid character. Fiercely protective, confident, sexy and definitely swoon-worthy. The chemistry between him and Emma sizzled with excitement and the sexual tension was so intense you could cut it with a knife. I loved that we actually got to see a relationship played out since I really think it's necessary to include those tender and important moments to connect with them as a couple. Their love was believable and very sweet and while some would call it 'instant romance' I think, for these two, it was inevitable more than anything else, and you'll just have to read the book to understand why. I also really enjoyed Ethan's link to all of this and thought it brought the perfect connection to the mystery surrounding Emma's life and his role in the end really made my heart smile.

Bottom line, I really enjoyed myself with this one and what I thought was a book I wasn't going to enjoy turned out to be a story I very much loved. Cara Lynn Shultz has created a fantastic story that will pull the reader on the very edge of their seats and captivate their hearts with Emma and Brendan's story. It reads like a stand alone, but after reading the few pages in the end titled "*The things I deal with for friends by Angelique*" makes me wonder if Shultz isn't exactly done with these amazing characters after all. I guess only time will tell. Till then, I'm anxious to get a copy of this book once it hits the shelves.

A Fantastic debut!

(Arc provided by Netgalley and Harlequin Teen)

Brianna Sprouse says

Brianna Sprouse

I am doing my book report over the book "Spellbound" by: Cara Lynn Shultz. This is a paranormal romance book that touches on the subject of teen love and witchcraft. A young girl meets the love of her life and they seem to be soul-mates, but there's a horrible curse attached to their story. Emma and Brendan must fight to stay alive and stay together or their love story will continue to end generation after generation.

Emma and Brendan are soul-mates and are hopelessly in love with each other, but theirs a problem in their love story they are the reincarnated spirits of two ancient legends. They must break the cruse and escape death or their story will continue on into the next generation. Along the way Emma finds out that is is a witch and her powers and her dead brother help her fight the curse and keep Brenden alive.

I find this book quite intriguing. The general plot of the story is unique but also very heartwarming. This love story is so strong and powerful I found myself reading it all night just so I would know what happened. Any story that can keep me intrigued and interested in it in that way has to be a good one. I believe this book should be on the shelves in every book store, but its not. This story keeps its readers on edge and always would wanting more. It makes the reader wish they were apart of the story them selves. I have read this book a total of 14 times and I still get excited every time I read it. The author wants the reader to see that no matter what history to very different people come from or what cruse seems to be put on them they can fight for love and conquer all.

I love this book and every other book by this author. Her books keep me interested and i can never wait to get to the next page. More people should read this book. In conclusion, this powerful love story by: Cara Lynn Shultz has been a very important book in my life and i hope to read more by this author.

Sandy says

[Pulling the reincarnation card (hide spoiler)]

Cait says

[image error]

Giselle (Book Nerd Canada) says

Emma moves to the Big Apple to live with her aunt after escaping an abusive home with her stepfather. Her first day at private school has her getting hit on by a douchy blonde Adonis. Then she gets rescued from the vile clutches of a mean girl by a brooding quiet boy named Brendan. From that point on her life will never be the same again.

I always have this issue with books where love at first sight is so apparent that I have to cross my eyes and snicker. But this wasn't the case with *Spellbound*. The reincarnation story line was so very interesting and I would think its quite romantic they're soulmates and that's what makes them feel like they know each other already. That being said I really wish the author moved the tale in the begging so the reader would know something was up. It gave the story more depth. I definitely enjoyed their little romance and how Emma realized she's no ordinary teenage girl.

When the author writes the past stories from the spell-book, I thought they were so interesting and fun to read that I just loved the book because of that. Now if there was a prequel with the previous characters, then I'd definitely gobble that one up as well. Great job Cara! Love it!

Claudia says

Spellbound was a surprisingly enjoyable read, very fun in some parts and very sweet in others.

The plot was pretty foreseeable (girl meets boy and has to fight against the forces of evil to live happily ever after with him) but I found the whole reincarnation thing very well constructed and organized.

I liked the author's prose, it gave lightness both to the story and to the main character's feelings and made the whole book very fluent.

I think the school part was way too cliched and it felt funny to associate classmates' bickers to the danger Emma and Brandan were in.

Anyway, I suppose it was nice and entertaining, at least to a certain extent, a perfect read if you're looking for a light, romantic book.

Wealththeow says

After her alcoholic step-father endangers her one too many times, Emma goes to stay with her aunt on the Upper East Side. She's nervous about her fancy new private school, but quickly finds friends and a crush--the mysterious Brendan. Based on popping streetlights and a few dreams, Emma convinces herself that she's the reincarnation of Brendan's ancestor's long lost love. I was too bored by the paint-by-numbers YA love story and basic writing (which is bad when relating the present day but DIRE when it talks about the past) to push through this. If there'd been more attention to the magical parts of this story, maybe I'd have persevered, but there's only the barest brush of the supernatural here--just enough to give Brendan and Emma immediate crushes on each other and a star-crossed reason to stay apart.

Vinaya says

I wrote in a post once that YA paranormals are becoming the Mills&Boon substitute for teenagers. In defence of that theory, I present this:

Stock Image: Leaning man grabs Swooning woman

And this:

Stock Image: Girl in Prom Dress, view from back

Tragically, most YA PNRs these days show just about the same amount of imagination and innovation in their writing as they do in their covers. But hold on! This is not necessarily a bad thing, sometimes.

Now let's be honest, nobody expects paperback romances to be ground-breaking, innovative works of literature. Which is not to say that they *can't* be... merely that nine times out of ten, they tend to be formulaic, clichéd stories about the handsome billionaire and his secretly beautiful secretary.

But they still constitute a majority of the publishing industry's fiction sales. Why? Because they provide women across the world with the purest form of escapism. And as a regular romance reader since the age of twelve (I was precocious, blame my parents!) I know the value of a reasonably well-written happily-ever-after. You go into these books knowing exactly what to expect, and emerge satisfied and starry-eyed.

Now allow me to draw the analogy a little further. Let us assume *Twilight* was the first Mills & Boon story for teenagers. It is to be expected that its success would spawn a generation of similar happily-ever-after stories that rely on a proven formula to draw readers and give them what they most wish for - lots of drama followed by a happy ending.

And as a variation on the true love theme, *Spellbound* performs creditably. Yes, like most YA PNRs, it is clichéd; like most YA PNRs, it is pure escapism with no claims to literary merit. And like most YA PNRs, it is a great way to while away a few hours while escaping from the confines of mundane, everyday life.

Spellbound has all the elements necessary for romantic fiction. A pretty but awkward teen girl, a hot and handsome love interest, relationship drama, paranormal elements, starcrossed love and a bad guy who's out to get the lovers.

I wrote a post a week or so ago about the common tropes used in YA stories set in a high school. Ironically, I read this book the day after I wrote that post, and I might as well have written it with this exact novel in mind. All of the high school tropes mentioned in the post make an appearance in this story.

Emma Connor has just joined a posh prep school in Manhattan. On her first day she meets:

1. The vicious, mean Blonde Popular Girl who hates her on sight
2. A gay guy who's destined to be her best friend
3. A Stupid Jock who sleazily hits on her
4. A Popular Jock who rescues her from the Mean Girl
5. A socially-outcast witch who's destined to be her other best friend

Emma feels an instant attraction to Brendan Salinger (Popular Jock), but he runs hot and cold, being nice to her at first, then ignoring her, rinse and repeat.

Her run-ins with Anthony (Stupid Jock) increase in intensity, until things become really ugly. In the meantime, Emma discovers that she and Brendan might possibly be the latest re-incarnated victims of a thousand year old curse. They are destined to fall in love, but their romance is also destined to end in pain and death. Oh, and Emma might be a witch who's being visited by her dead brother.

The story is trite, but fun. It's not badly-written, and the heroine is quite likeable. In fact, she does sometimes possess a sort of blind courage and manages to stand up to the Mean Girl instead of being the patient, saintly

sort, which earns her several points in my book.

She does have a few TSTL moments, (view spoiler), which had me screaming at her and wondering if she'd completely bypassed all those teen slasher flicks! Generally, however, the book proceeds at a decent pace, although it does slow down somewhat in the middle.

The good points: The first scene between Brendan and Emma, when they are in a club together, was *sexy!!!* In fact, one whole star for just that scene, which gave me goosebumps. It was very reminiscent of my teenage crushes and the slow, tentative movement towards physical accord left me happy.

The climax scenes are also fairly well-written. The action is fast-paced and thrilling, and my heart was in mouth as I urged Emma and Brendan to KILL the Bad Guy! It was pretty awesome, actually.

The rest of the book was pretty standard, but overall, it was a lot more appealing than most of the books of this ilk, like *Wings* or *Hush*, *Hush*. If you're looking for a light fluffy read that doesn't require too much intellectual engagement, and leaves you feeling warm and fuzzy, this might be a good choice.

A copy of this book was provided to me by the publishers via Net Galley for review purposes.
