



Ward Against Death

Melanie Card

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Twenty-year-old Ward de'Ath expected this to be a simple job—bring a nobleman's daughter back from the dead for fifteen minutes, let her family say good-bye, and launch his fledgling career as a necromancer. Goddess knows he can't be a surgeon—the Quayestri already branded him a criminal for trying—so bringing people back from the dead it is.

But when Ward wakes the beautiful Celia Carlyle, he gets more than he bargained for. Insistent that she's been murdered, Celia begs Ward to keep her alive and help her find justice. By the time she drags him out her bedroom window and into the sewers, Ward can't bring himself to break his damned physician's Oath and desert her.

However, nothing is as it seems—including Celia. One second, she's treating Ward like sewage, the next she's kissing him. And for a nobleman's daughter, she sure has a lot of enemies. If he could just convince his heart to give up on the infuriating beauty, he might get out of this alive...

Ward Against Death Details

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Author : Melanie Card

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From Reader Review Ward Against Death for online ebook

Wendy Darling says

This book is heaps and heaps of fun! I didn't know quite what to expect going into it, but I was hooked from the very first page and had a *grand* old time following Ward on his adventures.

There are so many awesome elements to keep you on the edge of your seat. Cool action sequences. People brought back from the dead. "Seeing smoke." A seductive villain who will steal your soul with a kiss. An assassin who kills someone by throwing a dagger through his throat. Oooo! Just the kind of action I like in a book.

Ward himself is also a really interesting hero, in that he's very sensitive, painfully honorable, and dead set on doing the right thing. He's also decisive, game for anything, and inconveniently attracted to Celia, the undead girl he's brought back to life who guilts him into helping her find her murderer. A great deal of the book is actually spent from her POV, and the dual perspectives are surprisingly well done.

I loved all the medical talk (Ward is also a physician). I loved Celia, who is a seriously kick-ass heroine, taking down attackers with incredible speed and strength and skill. I loved the descriptions of Ward's necromancy, which actually seems to take some, you know, concentration and power and focus. This is a fantastic YA crossover debut, and if things veer a little too often towards repetitive misunderstandings or romance novel territory, I'm okay with it since the rest of the book is so great. Plus the lovesick fixation is actually coming from Ward, since Celia really can't be bothered with this guy at first. I liked the role reversal, and I liked how their relationship developed.

This book is such a well-written, enjoyable read and I got out of it exactly what I didn't get out of *The Girl in the Steel Corset*: nuanced characters, the promise of an appealing romance, well-plotted action, fun adventures, rich world-building, and clever use of magic. I can't wait to find out what happens next to this reluctant necromancer...and I bet you're really going to like him, too.

*This review also appears in *The Midnight Garden*. An advance copy was provided by the publisher. Recommended for older teens and adults only, as this is more of a YA cross-over than traditional young adult novel.*

Completely Irrelevant Side Note: (view spoiler)

Jess the Romanceaholic says

This is a Quickie Review. For the full review, please visit The Romanceaholic.

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Series Best Read In Order: N/A

Steam Level: Warm

I don't normally start reviews off this way, but I honestly think that this was one if not the best books I've read all year, and since it's almost July at the time of my writing this, that's definitely saying something.

In Ward's world, magic is commonplace and some things that we take for granted are completely forbidden, such as surgery. Having always wanted to be a physician, Ward was kicked out before completing his training because of his penchant for grave-robbing -- a distasteful but necessary occupation for one who wants to study the illicit practice of surgery. Now forced to be a Necromancer for the rich, his job is to bring back those who have recently died for fifteen minutes so that their families can make peace with the deceased.

Hired by a rich man to wake Celia Carlyle, he is astonished when not only does she insist that she's been murdered rather than having been simply "ill" as her family suggests, but she also sleeps with a dagger under her pillow, dresses in men's clothing, and attempts to escape out the window. Knowing that her disappearance will result in an accusation of grave-robbing, he follows her trying to convince her that she must return. Instead Celia invokes Ward's Physician's Oath -- an unbreakable vow to help all those who ask for assistance, and one punishable by eternal torture in the afterlife if broken.

Making his decision, he follows her, having to re-wake her several times as the fifteen-minute limit of the waking spell is reached. At risk of permanently disturbing the "balance" between the worlds, he performs a dangerous spell to attempt to allow her to remain "awake" for a longer period, when something goes wrong. In addition to the fact that he's been forced to improvise with the required ingredients for the spell, he is interrupted before he can be certain his spell has been completed, but when Celia regains consciousness and helps to fight off their attackers, he assumes that everything worked as it should have.

However, it soon becomes apparent that his intended spell did not yield the expected results, as Celia shows no signs of decay, and in fact, actually seems... healthier than before.

Complicating matters is his own undeniable attraction towards her, but relations with the dead are strictly forbidden, and despite the fact that she eats, breathes, and walks, there is no denying that she had died and is therefore completely off-limits.

Add to that the fact that Celia is obviously not simply the pampered daughter of a rich noble, and Ward is soon drawn into a dangerous world of forbidden magic, assassinations, and deception.

One point of note is that while I have labeled this as Young Adult for my own convenience, it is more of a New Adult/Upper YA Fantasy. Not having read a lot of Young Adult in my life, I'm not certain just how important this distinction is, only that it was made and I felt it was wise to point it out. I think the biggest difference is that the main characters are no longer teenagers, but are instead both in the first stages of real adulthood, complete with all of the complications that come along with that stage of life

I admit, I'm actually having a hard time believing that this is a debut novel. Ms. Card's website and Goodreads profile list this as her only work, but I wonder if she's written any previous novels under a different name. I must do some Googlefu and see what I can discover, because I'm absolutely in love with her writing style and am thirsting for more.

It goes without saying (but I'll say it anyway) that I will be preordering any and all future books in this series, and I have a feeling I will be fangirling all over this one for a long time to come.

Recommended for fans of kick-butt heroines who reluctantly soften as they mature, heroes who actually have to work to earn the title, and an intriguing paranormal-fantasy universe to explore.

A very enthusiastically solid 5/5 Stars

Jillian -always aspiring- says

(Actual Rating: 4.5 stars)

My first thoughts after finishing *Ward Against Death*: *Oh my goodness, I loved this book so much, but now I have to wait a while for the sequel to meet these characters again. Darn it, I read this too fast!*

Ward Against Death, debut novel from Melanie Card, is the kind of book that should make a first-time novelist proud. Great main characters, awesome world-building, gripping plot, suspense, action, humor. . .whatever could go wrong here? All of those elements, when mixed well in just the right doses, hold so much potential to make a story *great*. . .and *Ward Against Death* was pretty darn great in my eyes.

The cover isn't the best representative of this book. If I were to have passed this book in a bookstore, I would likely have turned my nose up at it because it looks like a paranormal romance trying to appeal to the YA crowd by having two younger people on the cover. . .but this book *isn't* paranormal or even romance -- at least not in the traditional or expected ways. No, this book. . .this book is wonderful, honest-to-goodness *fantasy* in a realm all its own.

The story centers on Edward de'Ath, a.k.a. Ward, a bumbling twenty-year old necromancer with questionable powers. Don't let his scholarly appearance and naïveté fool you, though: he's actually been on the wrong side of the law quite a few times, to the point that he was even kicked out of the Physician's Academy. Though his main goal is to become a surgeon (an illegal profession in his world), he works a side-job of waking the dead for temporary periods -- and one such job is how he meets Celia, a nobleman's beautiful but *dead* daughter who claims she is in danger and must get out of her father's house. What's a poor necromancer to do?

Honestly, I loved Ward because of his struggles as a character. When we meet him in the story, he's such an unsure hero, a strange mixture of Ichabod Crane and Edmond Dantes blended with the characteristics of a scholar, a necromancer, and a physician. (Yes, he's *that* fun of a character. And he knows his stuff too!) Personally, I've always liked reading about characters who slowly grow into themselves and realize their potential and strength over a period of time. That kind of slow and steady growth makes their adventures and journeys so much more fulfilling. From this first novel, I can definitely say that Ward's adventures and journeys will be very fulfilling as he continues to grow and become as a character.

On the flip side, Celia was. . .well, to put it bluntly, *badass*. Expect her to be a damsel in distress? Expect her to be a whiner as she waits around for Ward to do all the work? Hah! No, believe me, she is definitely

more akin to Buffy than Bella Swan! And what a relief that was to me! Prior to reading the novel, I fully expected to dislike Celia (since the blurb for the book doesn't really paint her in the best light), but she too grows throughout the novel. Yes, she has her flaws, but she doesn't stay stagnant and stubborn as many flawed characters often do.

The best thing I can say about these two as they grow into being a pair is that *they bring out better in each other*. Ward's strength solidifies after a bit of time under Celia's influence -- and Celia's cold hard-edged personality begins to soften and chip away into a different kind of power that shows care and compassion for another human being. The "romance" between them is much more a companionship born out of necessity, though chemistry and attraction weasel their ways into Ward and Celia's interactions. The back and forth banter between the two offers some of the best moments in the book -- so, yes, there is substance in this potential relationship.

This story's world in and of itself is a surprisingly rich and potentially fascinating creation. The world-building sometimes even showed a certain Tamora Pierce-esque flair due to the inclusion of a creator Goddess, a branched magic system, intrigues between humans and magic users, and even a certain level of prejudice coming from various areas (examples: nobles looking down on commoners, magic users looking down on necromancers, physicians looking down on surgeons, etc.). The various social norms for this world were even more on display since the hero and heroine themselves are rather "quirky" in their roles and their ideas of who they truly want to be. This world has so much potential, so I really hope that in future installments Card will really delve even more so into showing off her creation in all its shades and ambiguities.

As a storyteller, Card still has areas to hammer out in regards to her narrative -- repetitions in phrasing, drawn-out character ignorance, sudden solutions and lightbulb moments that teeter on the edge of *deus ex machina* -- but she presents such a very good package with this novel that it's so easy to overlook the flaws. The ending in and of itself felt a bit rushed (thus the reason why my five-star reading experience was knocked down to an official rating of four stars); I wish the last two chapters could have been expanded a bit for exposition's sake. What started out as a strong book ended not with the bang I had been expecting but rather a whisper. However, the story is a solid one that keeps you engrossed and intrigued, if only because of the characters and the questions of what their fates will be.

Needless to say, I am eagerly anticipating any and all sequels, so keep them coming, Ms. Card. I will be reading.

Now the question is, dear Goodreader, will you come along for at least the ride to be offered in this first installment, *Ward Against Death*? I very much hope you will consider it.

Note: I received an advanced copy from the publisher through NetGalley.

Rê says

2.5 “Necromancer & Assassins” Stars

ARC via NetGalley

Thank you, Entangled Teen.

I'm gonna keep this short because I'm guessing this is a serious case of "it isn't you, it's me".

I tried to like this book. I really did, but something simply didn't work for me, and when I say something, I mean... this weird thing that probably has everything to do with subjectivity.

Look, this is a book with an assassin as the main character. A teen girl assassin. You see where I'm going there, right? This should be enough to make me super interested, and for a little while I was, but then the story simply lost me. Add the fact that the other main character is a sweet guy with the power to bring the dead back and I should've devoured this, right? The worse thing is I can't name a specific thing that happened that made me lose interest. I'm guessing it was more of a case of the story never really hooking me enough from the very start.

I partially blame this on the third person narrative. Sure I read a lot of 3rd POV books, especially since I'm such a huge fan of contemporary romance, but here it simply didn't work for me. The voices were not strong enough to hook me.

This is where the generic "I didn't connect with the characters" enter, I have to say. There wasn't a specific problem with the character or the plot, but I simply didn't connect with them enough. They didn't move me, they didn't make me root for them or ship them. I thought Ward's infatuation with Celia was sort of cute, but that was about it. There was no obsessing over whether they'd be together or not, which is a bad sign when it comes to a romance plot or subplot where I'm concerned. I'm not even ashamed to admit this. LOL.

If the romance didn't hook me, then I expected the plot to do that. I wanted to be interested in Ward's role as a necromancer, or Celia's assassin history, or even curious about the circumstances of her death and who was responsible for that, but it never happened. The feeling never came to me.

Judging from all the great reviews on Goodreads, this shouldn't have happened at all, but here we are...

Look, sometimes this weird thing where a book doesn't speak to you and you can't figure out why happens, and it did with me and Ward Against Death. I wish it had been different, though, and I hope whoever is reading this next has a much better experience than I did.

Debbie I Heart YA Books says

Ward Against Death is fantastic. I loved this story. It's a fresh, new Paranormal. I've never read about Necromancers before, but as long as the story has Ward, I will be counting the days for the second book in this series. Ward and Celia are awesome characters. They grabbed me and wouldn't let go. Talk about reversed roles: Celia is the one who is tough, fearless, the butt-kicker and Ward is the clumsy, unsure damsel in distress. These two are hilarious together. Poor Ward is trying so hard to impress Celia and prove he can be tough for her. But even though Celia can kick Ward's butt, and he's not a bad boy, I still fell in love with him. The romance between Ward and Celia has its problems in this first book, but that's where the cliffhanger comes in. I can't wait till the second book to see where the romance goes with these two. I have a

feeling it's going to be so goooood! The other thing I liked about the storyline is the POV from both Ward and Celia. I really enjoyed seeing the guy's logic, and what he's feeling and thinking right along with the girl's. Ward really did it for me. He is just an awesome character, and the storyline is beautiful with all the humor, drama and action you can ask for. I love the beautiful cover, too. I highly recommend Ward Against Death as A must read!

Amber at Fall Into Books says

Ward Against Death was a pleasant surprise for me. I went into this novel not expecting a lot, to be honest. The ratings on Good Reads aren't that flattering, but I decided I'd give it a try anyway. So I sampled it from Amazon and ended up downloading the entire novel. I'm glad that I did. This book is a fun and refreshing take on necromancers. The characters are unique and the plot is intriguing. I enjoyed it much more than I thought I would.

Ward is an entertaining and endearing hero. He is a bit clumsy and not that tough, but he is highly intelligent. He has a good heart, and even though he's socially awkward, he still manages to make an impression on Celia. I really liked the fact that he's not some perfect, brooding, dark leading man. It was a nice change to have a flawed and charmingly awkward character for the hero. Celia is a bad ass, and sometimes I didn't like her. However, she is strong, and overall, I was rooting for her. The more I got to know her, the more I liked her. For both Ward and Celia (the story is told in alternating third person limited POVs), I felt like Card could have given us more to go on so that we got to know them better. I still enjoyed reading about them, though.

The world-building is a bit lacking (I never got a completely clear view of the society), but the explanations that are given are woven throughout the story instead of given to the reader in info dumps, and I liked that. The pacing is pretty spot on, and I was hooked from the beginning. When a story starts with someone raising the dead, you know things will get more interesting from there. The plot itself is intriguing, and the bad guys are really, really bad and kind of horrifying. The writing style is more YA than Adult, but since I enjoy YA, that didn't bother me. There were times that I thought I was reading a YA novel instead of a New Adult story. The romance is lacking a bit, but thankfully there is no insta-love. It seems as if Card is building Ward and Celia's relationship on friendship, and I like that. The ending ties up a lot of loose ends, but leaves enough questions unanswered for the sequel, which I'm looking forward to.

Overall, I'd recommend this novel to anyone who is looking for a good New Adult Paranormal novel. The characters are endearing, the plot is unique, and the story is just a lot of fun. Give Ward Against Death a try. You won't be sorry.

Saly says

Ward Against Death was pure awesome! It reminded me how much I loved the Trudi Canavan books when I was fourteen.

Ward is a necromancer, called by Lord Carlyle for the wake of his daughter Celia. He doesn't consider his

magic that powerful and would rather be a physician but he was kicked out.

So, he wakes her up and is shocked to find not a noblewoman like lady but a woman who pulls a knife on him and then starts rattling tales of how she was murdered and can't trust anyone.

Ward comes across as a little weak and gullible at first but worry not, he shines brilliantly later. Celia manipulates him through the physician oath in helping her escape and getting to the bottom of her death.

You see Celia isn't a simpleton, she is cunning, and smart and a member of the Assassin Guild and on top of that her father is a Dominus(crime-lord).She is proud of who she is and her skills but there are moments when she sees the goodness in Ward when she thinks differently, but she is totally kick-ass.

I loved the whole world and Celia and Ward, both of them had layers.

Ward wasn't a simple little shy guy who turned his eyes away when seeing Celia disrobe, he was also someone who had a habit of stealing bodies and performing surgeries on them for practice. He uses his magic against all caution to help Celia but doesn't know how long it will work or how, he is.

Celia well she was a wily one, she didn't trust or understand Ward and even decides to seduce him. Ward on the other hand doesn't know what to do, after all she *is dead* but he continues to help her whether it comes to escaping from her father's men, the Guild or providing a distraction so that she can steal the Keepers key.

The book was a fantastic ride, the whole plot about Ancients and the Master, everything about it was awesome, even when these two are distrusting each other.

I am so reading whatever this author brings out.

ARC Courtesy Netgalley

Crowinato says

I read this Netgalley arc on my Kindle while sitting in my hotel lobby waiting for my airport shuttle to take me to the New Orleans airport (I had three hours to kill), and then finished it on the plane back to Denver.

Interestingly, I've now read two novels featuring young scholarly men who started out as surgeons, or studying to be surgeons, and ended up necromancers: this one, and *Johannes Cabal the Necromancer*. In Ward's universe, surgery is illegal, while in Johannes Cabal's, necromancy is, but it's a curious parallel, as both have been kicked out of physician's organizations and are in frequent trouble with the law (and in Johannes' case, angry village mobs, as well).

Ward de'Ath has a job (and character) sort of like Ned in *Pushing Daisies*, and I kept picture Lee Pace's earnest vulnerability and beautiful, shy smile when reading this book. Ward gets paid to people back from the dead for a short time (15 minutes), so their families and friends can have closure: they say good-bye and, I imagine, ask any last minute questions, like "why did you take me out of the will, you ungrateful jerk?", or make important confessions, like, "Please forgive me, I've been having an affair with your wife." (Maybe I'm a cynic, but to me, the people who need this sort of closure are people who want something. It has to be traumatic for the dead person, right?) Like Ned, Ward gets embroiled in a mystery when he awakens the daughter of a nobleman, Celia, who immediately tells him she's been murdered and asks for his help in

escaping. Because Ward is a sweetheart with a noble streak a mile long, he agrees, despite a distinct lack of experience protecting young ladies from killers. For Ward, Celia is chaos incarnate: she's an assassin; her murder is part of a very complicated magical conspiracy; and she's so mysterious and seductive and kick-ass that Ward has to keep reminding himself she's dead, so he'll stop falling in love with her.

Poor guy, he doesn't stand a chance.

This novel is narrated by Ward and Celia in alternating chapters, a favorite stylistic choice of mine when there are two main leads. Luckily, they are equally strong viewpoint characters: Ward is a darling, who's almost aggressively modest and awkward with hidden stores of awesome that he only occasionally lets show; and Celia is a decisive person with a lot of agency, able to go with the flow and do risky, impulsive things one minute and plan a complex scheme the next. The story flows seamlessly between them; there was no wishing I could get back to the other character to see what was really going on. They both discover clues separately that, together, tell the whole story. Even though it kept both of their viewpoints relevant, that was also the only truly frustrating aspect of this book; neither Ward nor Celia fully trust each other, so they rarely share information unless they have to. While a lot of tension develops from the secrets they keep from each other, I started to get annoyed with the two of them because of how frequently they waffled between trust and distrust. Celia would be on the verge of trusting Ward, for example, and then she would see him sneak out one night and immediately go ALL THE WAY back to her paranoid, "He's in on it! He's spying on me!" conspiracy. Taking a little step back is one thing, but it's like they kept hitting the reset button on their relationship.

Maybe that's why this read a little more like a paranormal romance novel to me than a fantasy with some romance elements. Eventually, they do start to feel companionship for each other and work together, but they also develop individually: Ward becomes more canny (not a lot but he's getting there) and shows evidence that he might be a more powerful necromancer than he thinks (if only he would just trust himself!); and Celia's cold ruthlessness softens a little without her losing her teeth. Still, they are fighting their attraction right up until the last page. Ward has ethical issues becoming involved with a dead girl, even though the spell he uses partway through the novel, after she keeps slipping back into being dead, to keep her going long-term seems to have done more than raise her – she's not decomposing or showing any signs of actually not being alive. (She's Chuck from *Pushing Daisies*, in other words.)

Even though Card does an adequate job world-building, the god and magic system and scenery seemed vague to me, a stage backdrop for the character drama. There were Inquisitors and Trackers and a criminal society and a Goddess and Light and Dark Sons, but I don't remember many details, especially about the setting itself (aside from the endless sewers). Not that I minded while I was reading it but now, writing this review, I can't really remember much outside the characters. That's usually a sign to me that there weren't a lot of details to the larger world-building, although I'll be honest and admit that it could be just an indication that I read this while waiting around to fly home from a conference, when it's difficult for me to focus. Either way, I think the world has promise, so I'm hoping Card delves deeper in the next book.

Card has set up a great odd-couple-falls-in-love premise with Ward and Celia, with a fresh supernatural twist based around an interesting magic system (that, again, I hope will get even more development). For me, falling in love with at least one character is the key aspect I need to continue reading a series, and here I have two strong ones, so I will definitely be looking forward to the next book.

Side note: I speculate that Card picked Ward's last name just so she could make the Dr. Death joke, which is the one time I was really thrown out of the story, because too-clever naming is just one of those authorial indulgences that always calls attention to itself. It makes it harder for me to take his name seriously, not like

that's a deal-breaker or anything.

Sarah says

“It’s just that I don’t tend to work on live patients.” He reached for his scissors, leaning so close he could feel the heat radiating from her body.

“Let me put you at ease.” She blew against his neck. The cavern grew uncomfortably warm. “I’m not alive.”

This was an interesting story, but I have to admit to getting very confused in places.

The characters in this were quite different. Celia was a dead assassin, trying to figure out who had killed her, and very much rocking to the beat of her own drum (and screw everybody else), whilst Ward was at times a gifted doctor, but at other times a bit of a bumbling idiot.

“He didn’t know where he was going or what he was doing, and now he stood in the middle of the street carrying a corpse.

Sh*t.”

Ward seemed very quick to forget that Celia was dead in this story, even though he was the necromancer who had re-animated her, and at times I was worried that he was going to totally throw caution to the wind, and indulge in a bit of necrophilia (which is a bit gross really).

“Besides, he couldn’t let a pretty, beautiful, stunning, sexy, bod- face distract him.

She. Was. Dead.

There was a law against what his body wanted.”

The storyline in this really confused me. Celia was killed, but we didn’t know who by, and then when they started to work things out, the explanation as to what had been going on was as clear as mud. Having read a couple of chapters twice I still couldn’t figure it out! Something about Celia’s father, an Innecroestri, a scholar, the Dominus, and a shadow walker. I really do not have a clue.

The ending to this was likewise confusing, but I’m pretty sure the good guys won... I think.

Michelle, the Bookshelf Stalker Queen of the Undead says

It's been a long time since one character simply outshined all others and carried a book. That is what happened in this book. Ward was simply adorable, charming, goofy, clumsy, brave, loyal, and so many other descriptive adjectives I could come up with. I wanted to hug him, scold him, laugh at him, fear for him, and congratulate him.

The story was good but really wasn't outstanding. My biggest problem with it is confusion. Especially in the beginning, I couldn't figure out the organizations involved/mentioned. Celia, the other main character in the story, would mention her dad being part of one organization, she being part of another organization, and then mention yet another organization and then the story would just continue. I couldn't figure out what was what. Eventually, I was less confused.

Besides my confusion, the middle seemed to drag a bit. It did pick up eventually, and I liked the ending.

So, why 4 stars when I really seemed to only complain in this review? Well, it was simply Ward. He really is so much fun that I absolutely encourage everyone to read this book. If you don't love Ward after reading it, there is something wrong.

E. Anderson says

The first thing I noticed about Melanie Card's novel is how completely ensconced the reader is in the world. It isn't that the author bogs down the narrative with details, or that there are hefty explanations for every little thing that is different from the way we live. It's just there — the world that Celia and Ward live in is what it is and it's completely believable.

WARD AGAINST DEATH reads almost like a historical fantasy, although it exists in a completely different universe — comparable, perhaps, to Elizabeth C. Bunce's STARCROSSED, in which traditions and fashion are akin to Old-Timey Europe and there is a thing or two borrowed from the steampunk cannon. But at the same time, the world of WARD is a creation all its own, with magic and intrigue and conspiracy theories aplenty.

Ward, the twenty-year-old necromancer (necromancy is a Thing in Card's world — as run-of-the-mill as medicine) of the story is accidentally tied to Celia, the young girl he was meant to wake for only the briefest amount of time. Except, instead of waking and saying goodbye to her family, she takes off out the window and leads him through the sewer system at which point he has to use a rare spell to keep her awake for, well, he isn't sure how long but longer than a regular wake is meant to. And soon he discovers that she is not only tied to the mob, but also a member of a secret assassin's league.

Celia, of course, doesn't trust Ward. She honestly doesn't trust anyone, given her background. She's positive that she was murdered, and that her father, who is basically a mafia Don, had something to do with it. She's determined to seduce Ward to get information out of him — because surely he is as tied to her murder as anyone else associated with her father — it was her father who hired him, after all — and she's planning to kill him as soon as she gets what she wants. But what neither of them suspect is that this strange partnership will turn into a friendship, and perhaps a bit more.

With elegant prose and a clever wit, WARD AGAINST DEATH is a fun, fast-paced adventure, with just a hint of romance and plenty of suspense. I highly recommend picking up a copy. I know I'm already looking forward to the sequel!

Mlpmom (Book Reviewer) says

RTC!

Cristina Buzoianu says

Originally posted on my blog, <http://bibliophilemystery.blogspot.com/>

The description of this book intrigued me a lot, so I was thrilled when I received it as an ARC. This story got me hooked up from the first page, and kept me on the edge of my seat the entire time. It's unlike anything I've read before! Secret societies, assassins who throw knives through one's neck *shiver*... Ward is different from the male leading characters I've read about lately, and I had a hard time getting to like him, because he's not an Alpha male. He's just a young man in his twenties, trying to cope with a troubled past and his ruined career, unsure of himself and unaware of his real powers. But as I went deeper into the story, I realized that his clumsiness is what makes him so adorable. Besides, he's painfully honorable, very sensitive, and dead set on doing the right thing. I'm sure you're going to like him too. Celia on the other hand is the jewel of this story. She's a kick-ass heroine, who sleeps with a dagger under her pillow, all dressed up in men clothes. She's also an assassin, a damn good one, taking down her enemies one by one in no time. She's decided to find out who took her life and why, no matter the cost. She doesn't like Ward's presence around her at all. He's so noisy and awkward, no way she's falling for such a guy! He doesn't fit at all with her assassin skills. Actually he's the one who can't get his eyes off her. There's also a villain who can steal one's life with a kiss... I absolutely loved this book but I don't think young adults under 16 should read it. There's some violence there that children should be spared of.

Happy Reading!

Leyla says

Ward Against Death was an unexpected but welcome breath of fresh air in comparison with other paranormal romances. Actually, if I have to be accurate, I would call this book a (urban?) fantasy, although the hero does have a love interest in the heroine.

Let me start by telling how much I liked Ward. He put the freshness in the aforementioned breath of air. He was so different from the usual stereotyped hero, so clumsy, awkward and adorably naive, and yet so strong and faithful. It was truly impossible not to love him, whereas it took me some time to understand and like Celia, whose strength, both physical and psychological, often hid her true nature and wishes.

The novel was fast-paced, very smooth and captivating and I was completely taken by the protagonists' adventures and the ending left me quite satisfied and needing more. I'm really looking forward to read the next books in the Chronicles of a Reluctant Necromancer and I'm sure I won't be disappointed.

Kate (Nomalicious Reads) says

More reviews can be found at my blog Nomalicious Reads

I started reading Ward Against Death in utter excitement and couldn't put it down.

I knew it would be good, but it was just so much more than I thought it would be!

Melanie Card, you astound me with your writing prowess.

Astounding, surprising, stunning, awe-inspiring, sensational, remarkable, spectacular, stupendous, phenomenal, extraordinary and incredible; are a few words to sum up my thoughts on this book.

First I'll say that Ward is a great nickname for Edward, I've never heard it as a name before, I think its a great step away from the norm and defines Ward as the unique character that he is.

I agree with Celia's amusement of '*Ward, warding*' I thought the same thing before it happened, and thought it amusing when she mentioned it.

The only way to describe Celia is to go with how Ward aptly describes her as: *Annoying, arrogant, beautiful, deadly, dead, Celia.* (I only think she is annoying with her trust issues, but its understandable, and part of why I love her) and '*He suspected Celia's version of solving a problem was stabbing it in the heart.*'

Celia is just so kick-ass and I loved how she was the dominant character to Wards submissive self, and not the other way around.

Ward is just so cute, don't get me wrong he has his sexy moments! But he has this nerdy cuteness going on for him that you just can't help but fall in love with him.

Celia and Ward's interactions... ooh boy; Ward just touching her hand was sexy! I almost melted into a puddle of goo by just reading it!

Watching them both grow throughout the book is an experience worth reading.

The one thing I would like to know more about is: the world that they are in; Melanie isn't too forthcoming on the details, and even though it didn't ruin the reading experience, I would like more info to understand the world better, and hopefully will do so in the second book. (Which I can hardly wait for!)

I'd also like to find out how old Celia and Ward actually are, I'm pretty sure it isn't mentioned - but I could have missed that? (I don't think I would classify this as YA, but who knows?!)

I wont say much else, as I don't want to ruin the experience for you, except Ward Against Death by Melanie Card is definitely a must read for paranormal lovers!

I give Ward Against Death by Melanie Card: 5 stars.

(wow, I didn't think that it was out until tomorrow but you can buy it already on Amazon and the Bookdepo)
Go put your orders in book lovers before you miss out!
