



## When Life Gives You Demons

*Jennifer Honeybourn*

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Sixteen-year-old Shelby Black has spent the past year training to be an exorcist. Her great-uncle Roy—a Catholic priest and Shelby’s guardian—believes she has a gift for expelling demons, and he’s put her through exorcist boot camp hell, but he still doesn’t trust her to do an exorcism on her own.

High school is hard enough without having to explain that you fight demons for a living, so Shelby keeps her extracurricular activity quiet, especially from Spencer, her cute math tutor. Secrets run in Shelby’s family, though: her mother has been missing ever since an exorcism went horribly wrong, and Uncle Roy is tight-lipped about it. But Shelby’s hell-bent on finding her mom, no matter what—even if what it ends up costing her her soul AND a date with Spencer.

## When Life Gives You Demons Details

Date : Published July 17th 2018 by Swoon Reads

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Author : Jennifer Honeybourn

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Genre : Young Adult, Fantasy, Paranormal, Demons, Supernatural, Contemporary, Young Adult Paranormal, Romance, Fiction, Young Adult Fantasy



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## From Reader Review When Life Gives You Demons for online ebook

### Nicole (FearYourEx) says

4/5 stars

If you're looking for a contemporary that's a bit mystery, a bit fun, and a teeny tiny bit romance this book may be perfect for you.

You follow Shelby as she lives with her great uncle, a Catholic priest and exorcist. She's training to be an exorcist as well. There is a pretty powerful demon causing problems in her town and she wants to get to the bottom of it.

Shelby grows a lot as the book goes on. The book was really fun and just the different sort of read I needed when I read it.

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### Candace Robinson says

Well that was fun! Kind of had a Buffy vibe but with exorcisms!

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### Breanna says

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*ARC provided by the publisher.*

I would like to thank the awesome ladies at the Swoon Reads booth at BookCon for recommending this book; they had me sold at humorous contemporary + paranormal. I knew from the first page that I was going to be seriously entertained while reading this. *When Life Gives You Demons* was the perfect fun summer read!

In addition to trying to pass her classes and studying with her cute math tutor, Shelby spends her time outside of high school training to be an exorcist with her great-uncle, a Catholic priest. I think my favorite part of reading *When Life Gives You Demons* is how much it reminded of *The Mediator* series, which remains of my favorite series ever (seriously, if you don't know what I'm talking about go check out those books). I love the premise of a high schooler that, in addition to worrying about exams and crushes, also has to find time to expel the ghosts / demons lurking around. I do wish the book had been a bit longer; the ending definitely felt rushed and I think it could have benefited from a few more chapters. *When Life Gives You Demons* was extremely fun and light-hearted and I really hope to see more books featuring plots similar to this in the future!

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## **Rachael (RedRchlReads) says**

*I received an ARC from Fierce Reads in exchange for an honest review. All thoughts and opinions are my own.*

### **4 Stars!**

When Life Gives You Demons by Jennifer Honeybourn is one of the few contemporaries I've read this year, and I'm happy to say that it was a fun, quick read with some Buffy-like elements. Shelby is an exorcist in training, who, like any other high school girl, is not pleased about her new vocation. While the story covers some fairly heavy, serious topics, it never takes itself too seriously and instead tends to turn a more humorous way. I found myself laughing many times when it easily could have turned in a darker direction.

I definitely loved the Buffy vibes that came through in most of the story. I'm a huge fan of the show and this story has the same sort of feel while definitely being its own entity. The characters were great - relatable teens, a bit of a love interest, frustrating family members, cool older men - each with their own quirks, strengths, and weaknesses. Shelby definitely tries her best, though she often fails in her efforts to meet her Catholic priest and uncle's exorcist demands.

Overall a fun story with a different feel than many other contemporaries. If you're looking for a mystery that doesn't take itself too seriously, try picking up When Life Gives You Demons!

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## **Mar says**

A rather quick read, but I think it would have benefited from a few additional chapters. You can read this book in one sitting, and it's lighthearted, but the relationship between Spencer and Shelby came off as underdeveloped and awkward. Also, it seemed like the action scenes were over as soon as it started, so that was a little weird, but overall, it was kind of enjoyable.

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## **Katherine Paschal says**

“Hi. Um, is Spencer here?”

A smile crawls across the man’s face. Friendly or creepy, I’m not exactly sure, but I’m going to take it as a good sign that he’s opened the door to let us inside. Either Spencer is here, or this guy is inviting us in so he can kill us.

Hopefully Spencer is here.

Shelby spends her time going to school, crushing on her study partner, hanging out with her best friend- oh and hunting demons. As an apprentice to her uncle Roy who just so happens to be a Priest, Shelby has spent

the last 5 months leaning the art of exorcisms. On top of that, her mom abruptly left home to go to Rome for a demon training class and Shelby hasn't heard from her in months. It is hard pretending to be a normal teen when your spare time is secretly spent fighting the minions of hell...

This was such a quirky mix of horror, drama and humor and I ate it up! When you can go off on metal tangents about body movements and exasperating her mentor while in the middle of an exorcism, I knew that this was the book for me. I sat down just to read a chapter or two before bed (because what is better as a bedtime treat than demons?) and found myself half way through the book in just a little over an hour. This was such a fast and engaging reading, easily something you can enjoy in it's entirety in a day (a single sitting if you are motivated enough) and it is a standalone that wrapped up ever so nicely.

As soon as he starts the incantation, Ms. C's body contorts in a way that reminds me of those crazy talented acrobats in Cirque du Soleil. She practically does a cartwheel off the wall, and I can't help but be impressed by how limber she is. I mean, she has to be at least thirty years old, but from the way she's moving, she could probably medal in the Olympics.

The horror elements were spot on, creepy and demonic, just like what you would expect from a scary movie. I also really enjoyed how there were different cultures and religions used in the exorcisms, showing as long as you have faith in something, the power works the same. My favorite part of the book though was the relationship dynamic between Shelby and her uncle Roy. She forces terrible healthy food on him to help him live longer since he is "old and likely to die" while at the same time eating whatever awful foods she can find. He at times acts like her parent, other times like her teacher and also like her conscience, all creating such an interesting relationship between the two that made me really engaged in the book. There was also a nice dash of romance and friendship, but Shelby and Roy interactions hands down the best.

Just when you think you are about to read a typical girl-get-demon-training-from- Priest-while-experiencing-typical-high-school-stuff BAM! And you are wrong. Jennifer took the plot in a surprising direction I sincerely never saw coming, it was a crazy twist that just lured me in even more (if that is even possible with how into the book I already was!). This story is hands down 100% unique and such a good read. This is my first encounter with Jennifer but I loved her people, the dialog, the plot and the subtle humor that she was able to insert into the darkest of moments. If I can chuckle while reading about a demon exorcism, then you know this is the right book for me. I look forward to picking up more books from her in the future- her other books are now on my to-read list.

I am voluntarily reviewing a complimentary copy of this title.  
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**Alyssa says**

Cute!

\*\*\*Review posted on The Eater of Books! blog\*\*\*

When Life Gives You Demons by Jennifer Honeybourn

Publisher: Swoon Reads

Publication Date: July 17, 2018

Rating: 4 stars

Source: ARC received via exchange

Summary (from Goodreads):

Sixteen-year-old Shelby Black has spent the past year training to be an exorcist. Her great-uncle Roy—a Catholic priest and Shelby’s guardian—believes she has a gift for expelling demons, and he’s put her through exorcist boot camp hell, but he still doesn’t trust her to do an exorcism on her own.

High school is hard enough without having to explain that you fight demons for a living, so Shelby keeps her extracurricular activity quiet, especially from Spencer, her cute math tutor. Secrets run in Shelby’s family, though: her mother has been missing ever since an exorcism went horribly wrong, and Uncle Roy is tight-lipped about it. But Shelby’s hell-bent on finding her mom, no matter what—even if what it ends up costing her her soul AND a date with Spencer.

What I Liked:

I adored Jennifer Honeybourn's debut novel, *Wesley James Ruined My Life*, and I've been pretty excited about her next standalone, *When Life Gives You Demons*. First - can we take a moment to appreciate the cover? I think it is fantastic. Simple, yet eye-catching and it makes you giggle a little. I breezed through this book and I really enjoyed it as I was reading it. If you are looking for a quick, hilarious read, this is one for you!

This book is centered around exorcisms, which is a rare topic in YA lit. Shelby's uncle is a priest, and a very skilled exorcist. He has been training Shelby to be an exorcist, but Shelby isn't all that great. Shelby hides this "hobby" of hers from everyone, including her best friend Vanessa, and her cute math tutor Spencer. What would her friends think if they found out how she exorcised demons? Shelby might not have to wonder for long, because something dangerous is happening in the demon world, and it could affect her family, her friends, and her budding relationship with Spencer.

I love the light tone of this book. It deals with exorcisms, which can get pretty heavy and/or pretty horrific, pretty quickly. Exorcisms are usually the topic of horror films, and I don't do horror - no thank you. There wasn't anything terrifying or scary about this book - for the most part, the tone was light and funny, though the climax got a little more intense.

This book is set in modern times but with a definite paranormal touch to it, what with all the demons and exorcisms. Of course, it depends on what you believe in, these things could be supernatural to you. The concept of Catholicism and religion is important in this book, but not overwhelming, if that makes sense. Religion isn't forced upon the reader.

Shelby is such a funny heroine to follow. She really wants to do an exorcisms by herself, but her uncle doesn't trust her. She really wants to express her interest in Spencer Callaghan, but doesn't want to get rejected. One thing that Shelby is dealing with is the disappearance of her mother - nobody knows where she is (though Uncle Roy has been telling people that she is visiting relatives in Italy). Shelby is a fun person,

persistent and a little vulnerable too.

Spencer is a secondary character but a very important one. He isn't just a love interest - he plays a big role in the rising action of the book. He's a good guy, and a cute love interest too. He's one of those sweet, nice boys, not a dominant alpha male (nothing wrong with either type of guy). I adored Spencer.

I liked Shelby and Spencer's quiet friendship (though it budded into something more, which was adorable.) I also liked Shelby's friendship with Vanessa, which was very positive and healthy. Shelby's parents weren't in the picture, but she had a strong relationship with her uncle. Positive relationships were a very good part of this story.

The romance was sweet! Shelby was crushing on her math tutor (Spencer), and he was crushing on her, and it's so adorable. Both of them are hiding things from each other, but both of them really care about the other. So cute!

The ending gets really intense, though still light in terms of the mood. This book was really fun and light to read, a quick read that had me smiling and laughing and occasionally swooning. The ending is sweet and a HEA for everyone. Very satisfying!

What I Did Not Like:

More swoons! I wanted more swoons for sure. This is a Swoon Reads novel, after all. More swoons is never a bad thing!

Would I Recommend It:

Contemporary romance fans will like this one! You don't need to be a PNR fan to enjoy it. And it's not super religious so if you're not into books with religion, don't be put off. The religious aspects are there, and it was cool to see that (so many YA books avoid the topic of religion), but it wasn't a Big Thing in this book (like a statement type of thing, or a theme). Exorcisms were definitely there, but not in a horror kind of way. I liked the book!

Rating:

4 stars. I have to commend Jennifer Honeybourn for her unique story and creativity! I'm not sure I would have picked up this book had I not read and loved the author's previous (unrelated) book. When Life Gives You Demons was funny, swoony, creative. I'm excited to read what Honeybourn comes up with next!

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## **Manon says**

This review was originally posted at [www.cafemanon.nl](http://www.cafemanon.nl)

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When Life Gives You Demons is a story about a teenage girl named Shelby. Shelby is a student at St. Joseph's catholic school, she has a best friend named Vanessa and she has a crush on Spencer. So far, she sounds like a typical teenage girl. But Shelby's life is far more mysterious than the life of most teenage girls.

Shelby's mother left under mysterious circumstances and she is missing ever since. Shelby is living with Uncle Roy, a priest, and he is training her to become an exorcist. Shelby wants to keep her training a secret. What would her friends think if they know about her being an exorcist? Also she wants to find her mother.

When Life Gives You Demons is a fast-paced and easy to read story. Although it is about exorcism, it doesn't have a scary horror vibe to it. Actually, the paranormal elements are written in a fun and light manner. I liked that the book didn't get too much into the history of exorcism, but it did explain just enough for the story to work.

Shelby is a wonderful character and her internal dialogues are sometimes relatable and often hilarious. Her crush on Spencer is adorable. I liked reading about her exorcism training with Uncle Roy.

Buffy the Vampire Slayer meets The Exorcist in this amazing paranormal young adult novel. I would recommend this book to everyone who is looking for a fun and light read.

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### **Kayla Brunson says**

*ARC provided in exchange for an honest review.*

I really enjoyed *When Life Gives You Demons*! When I read the synopsis I knew that I was going to have to get my hands on it. A high school girl who's training as an exorcist? Hand it over!

Our main character Shelby is training under her Uncle Roy who happens to be a priest. What is Shelby training for? Well to be an exorcist of course. She keeps her extracurricular activities to herself because she goes to a Catholic school and doesn't know how her peers will react.

***“If they found out that I have a direct experience with evil spirits, they would probably publicly shun me.”***

I loved reading about Shelby's experience with trying to be a teenager and deal with boys, exorcisms and learning a bit about herself along the way. It was funny and light enough to keep it YA. The romance was sweet and the love interest was easy to love.

Overall, it was a light read with a paranormal vibe. I highly recommend picking this up when it comes out next month!

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### **Samantha (WLABB) says**

Who knew a book about a teenaged exorcist could be so charming and delightful?

- Pro: You will see this in a million reviews for this book, but it's only because it's so true. This book

definitely scratched a Buffy-type itch for me. Shelby shared a lot of similarities with Buffy. She was a little snarky with a great sense of humor, and also struggled finding the balance between fighting demons and being an average teenager. This plus the raging guilt about her mother's disappearance endeared Shelby to me.

- Pro: So. Much. Fun. This book may have dealt with some dark themes, but it was kept on the light and fluffy side. I laughed and grinned and smiled and simply enjoyed it so much.
- Pro: The relationship between Shelby and Uncle Roy was very sweet. They each cared a lot about the other, and showed it in many different, not so obvious ways.
- Pro: There's just not enough YA books featuring teen exorcists. I love that authors are incorporating new and different topics into their books, and I found Honeybourn's approach to this topic interesting. The main focus was from the traditional Catholic viewpoint, but eventually, other schools of thought regarding exorcism/demon hunter were incorporated, which was all quite fascinating.
- Pro: Honeybourne did a fantastic job guiding us through the exorcisms. There was lots of detail when we were in the midst of the actual exorcism and also, written reports.
- Con: The resolution was a bit rushed. It wasn't terrible, but I was surprised at how quickly we reached that point.
- Pro: The romance was so sweet. The does-he, doesn't-he and all the excitement Shelby felt with every accidental brush or longing gaze made me smile. I do wish there had been a little more of this adorable romance though.

Overall: A fun and fast-paced look at what it takes to be a teen exorcist. It was a delight tagging along with Shelby as juggled her family obligations, her schoolwork, and the matters of her heart.

\*ARC provided in exchange for an honest review.

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### **Jen says**

*\*\*I received this as an e-galley from the publisher through Edelweiss in return for an honest review.\*\**

I honestly didn't think I was going to end up reading this book in two days but that's exactly what I did. Somehow it sucked me right in and I could not bring myself to put it down until I finished it. With some great *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* and *Mediator* vibes, this book was fun, quick, and a completely engrossing read.

The story moves quickly and reasonably, with only a few moments here and there where it felt like things were a little too fast or easy. Some revelations came about sort of randomly, and while there was plenty of foreshadowing and clues that I could glean onto (the Spencer thing was so easy to see from the start), when Shelby finds out about these secrets it just felt a little...anticlimactic. The ending itself felt a little easy and rushed too, and there were definitely times I wished for longer scenes and more details about things (i.e. the

setting, which is supposed to be Seattle, a fact which I was constantly forgetting). The exorcism scenes were great, though, with just enough detail to have me grossed out or jumping at certain moments, and kept the story flowing. Overall the plotline was great and interesting, and everything worked well together in the end.

I really enjoyed the characters and their relationships with each other. There's the narrator, Shelby, who just felt so realistically a teenager with her unenthusiasm about training to be an exorcist juxtaposed against her desire to prove to her uncle that she is capable of being one, as well as her issues with school and social life. (See also: bedazzled holy water spray bottle. It just said so much about her character and I loved it.) I loved her relationships with her Uncle Roy, whom she loves but also feels annoyed at at times, and her best friend Vanessa, who is by her side no matter what and who doesn't disappear into the background of the story like I see happen often in some YA novels.

I really liked Spencer and seeing Shelby's relationship grow with him, and while there were definitely some interesting things about him, I would have loved to gotten more glimpses into his personality. But it was also nice because while their romance was cute, it didn't overtake the storyline, nor was it one of those over-the-top romances either. It was sweet, had some conflict, but felt appropriate for teenagers and gave off the impression of the possibility for growth.

This was a fun, captivating story that had me hooked from the start. I really enjoyed the characters and storyline, and couldn't get over how easily I got swept away by it. There were some flaws in pacing and other things, but overall it was a great story that I would definitely recommend to fans of things like *Buffy* and Meg Cabot's *Mediator* series.

4 stars

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### **Lisa Mandina says**

This book is really exactly what it sounds like. A humorous story about exorcisms. LOL. No, really. In a good way! It reminded me quite a bit of one of my all time favorite TV shows, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*. I really think this would be kind of a fun series if that was ever a possibility. I would enjoy getting to follow Shelby as she works on her exorcism skills. And then there is her crush Spencer, and what his family does, they would be interesting to get to know more about as well. I feel like there is even a lot more history of Shelby's mother and Uncle Roy that would be fun to throw in to another story.

Besides the fact that I could see it as a series, I will tell you it was a very quick and easy read. I was just turning pages to get to see what was going to happen. Where was Shelby's mom? What was Spencer up to, because there was obviously something going on with him and his family? Then, when we got about 80% in, the story really took off, and it just dove right into the heart of the action and trying to save the town and those they loved. There were definitely your normal exorcism details: heads turning around, crawling on the ceiling, and super-human strength. But then there were some funny bits to go along with them, including a possessed dog, and a teenage boy who really was just being a teenage boy even if his mom thought he was possessed.

A quick, fun, read, check it out!

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## Rendz says

3.5

\*I was sent an ARC from the publisher, in exchange for an honest review!\*

I did not expect to like this as much as I did to be honest. Like I expected some really cheesy and cliche plot, with cooky characters and supernatural elements that I like to make fun of. But nope. I mean it was a little cheesy yes. But it was also quite fun!

What I Liked:

Shelby. I liked her a lot. She was super clumsy, slightly sarcastic, but very determined. Her attitude towards her demon hunting life was pretty much what you would expect from a teenager. They don't want to run in the family business, but they do it because they love their family. She was a fun character to journey the book with. Her inner dialogue always held a great punchline—or she did something very awkward/foolish that brightened the scene. The way she talked about crushes/romance and her reactions, was where I really connected her. It was one big #relate.

The relationship between her and her Uncle Roy was so sweet. It's not exactly like a father-daughter relationship (nor a Father-daughter one...hehehe....get it?) They were like friends who kept discovering new things about each other, getting into silly fights and coming together to make it work in the end. It was so cute.

I have already mentioned that this book has its fair share of humour. And this is what I liked the most about the book. Going in, I thought that I would be getting all sorts of moody, broody characters. That everything would have a greying filter over it making every scene dark and heavy, but nope. This was full of fun. It was a super light read and yes there are those dark moments, for those who really need them. I personally loved the lightness of it and how easy it was to read.

Honeybourn's writing style isn't anything haunting or rather special, but it does it's job and keeps you hooked. The pacing is great and it doesn't lag in too many places. The dull moments are very few and I really enjoyed the exciting bits!

The exorcising parts were....quite interesting. Whereas I expected something super dark and horrific, I got this bloody humour. I found it all the more entertaining.

If some of you out there are afraid of this book coming off as preachy because Uncle Roy is a priest, I can put your worries to rest. Despite the book being about a couple of Catholics running around expelling demons, I don't recall there being any lectures on virtues. (I think the characters go to Mass like once...?) But like any story, the book has its themes, and some of them cross over with Catholic beliefs.

The romance, I'll admit, could have been more swoonier. The love interest was great, a little flat, but I liked him for the most part. What I liked more were Shelby's reactions when she had even the slightest interaction with him. That was funny.

What I Disliked:

It had its cheesy moments. I can't read the words "demon hunting" without cringing a little on the inside, I'm sorry!

I would have also liked a little more complexity to the plot. The book was really short, but did that have to mean that the plot had to be super simple??? I would have liked a little more intensity and high stakes.

And don't even get me started on the quicky chick clean ending. I do not take those well. I need proper resolution. With underlined consequences. Thank you very much.

Overall, I really enjoyed this. It was a demonic, supernatural read. But it was super light, fun and hilarious at times. I think that Honeybourn created a great cast of characters and a fun adventure, should you ever need to read something quick and easy!

Rating: 3 / 5 Stars

Recommend?: For the ones who want to go on a fun demon hunt, yeah!

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### **Kayla says**

So I first added this to my 'to read' shelf because the premise sounded like a book that I would enjoy and I was right because it was definitely my thing.

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### **Tanja Voosen says**

Das Buch war leider so gar nicht gut. Dabei geht es um Dämonen und Dämonenjäger! Alles war so extrem oberflächlich und ständig gab es "Sprünge" in der Handlung und Zeitebene, die ich nicht nachvollziehen konnte. Außerdem (ich habe gezählt!) gibt es 6 (!) Mal folgende Situation.

Shelby (Prota) will einen Dämon austreiben.

Sie schafft es nicht, weil sie den Spruch nicht richtig aufsagt.

Besagter, besessener Mensch haut ab.

Niemanden juckt es mehr, was mit der Person ist.

Vorzugsweise springen die Besessenen aus dem Fenster bei ihrer Flucht.

Ohne Witz - das passiert hier ganze 3 Mal!!! Und weg sind sie ...

Das Buch baut auf ALLES, was es schon gibt:

- Latein als Sprache zum Exorzismus

- Nur Priester besitzen diese Gabe

- Weihwasser hilft gegen Besessenheit

- Und Kreuze ebenfalls

Das sind sozusagen die einzigen "Waffen" der Figuren.

Wenn das Böseste was Dämonen tun können, aus einem Fenster springen ist ... naja, könnt ihr euch vorstellen, wie spannend diese Geschichte ist. Leider eine große Enttäuschung. Dabei war der Titel so super cool und das Cover auch!

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### Flavia says

This book like Jennifer Honeybourn's other book, *Wesley James Ruined My Life*, was a very quick read for me! If I had had the time, I would have read it all in one sitting. Rather than focusing on too much detail, Honeybourn's books tend to be very plot driven, which is why they are a little shorter than the average YA book. *When Life Gives You Demons* definitely gave me some *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* + *My Best Friend's Exorcism* + *Supernatural* vibes (which is definitely a good thing), and it was quite fluffy despite its darker content (i.e. demons, demonic possessions, and exorcisms).

I am the kind of reader who definitely enjoys detail (I mean, I'm a mega fan of Tolkien's work!), so I would have been happy if this book had been thicker because of more in-depth information. But at the same time, I was happy to read a book that moved very quickly story-wise, and that didn't make me think too hard. The writing is very easy to follow (and has improved since Honeybourn wrote her first book), and the author wrote a very convincing narrative for the protagonist, Shelby Black (meaning that Shelby's motivations, way of thinking, decision-making, etc. were very fitting for a teenager). Overall this was a very quick, light, and fun summer read!

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### Stacee says

3.5 stars

I really liked Shelby. She's snarky and her inner monologue was funny. Shelby's dynamic with Uncle Roy was adorable. I loved that she was always forcing healthy food on him. There are some fun characters but I didn't feel like we got to know anyone.

Plot wise, it was quick moving. However, like with the characters, it was very shallow. There wasn't any sort of back story or explanation of anything. The build up was non-existent and all of a sudden, it was over.

Don't get me wrong, I did enjoy this. The story was fun and it was a super quick read. I just would have liked a bit more depth and more at the end.

\*\*Huge thanks to Swoon Reads for providing the arc free of charge\*\*

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### Max Baker says

#### **Thank you Netgalley for providing me a free review copy in exchange for an honest review**

Remember *The Exorcist*? Terrifying movie? Pea soup? Spinning heads? Oscar nominations up the wazoo and so on? Yeah, of course you do. It's a great movie. Iconic even. It basically forced the word exorcism into the common lexicon and now, so many years later we have *When Life Gives You Demons* the latest in a long line of supernatural stories who's premise is the best part of the story.

The thing about this book is that it is superficial in every sense of the word. Honeybourn's second novel

reads like she did a quick Wikipedia scan and built a story around that. And that's disappointing because the history of exorcism, mysticism, and the Catholic church is absolutely fascinating and could have been so much more interesting than what this book turned out to be. It never really went there with the whole "exorcisms/demons are real" thing. We're told about them and we're told about the demon hunters, but again it's all very surface level. Like, Shelby comments on how a demon hunter has a tattoo of 666 on his arm and the hunter tells her it's to lure the demons into a false sense of security and there this thing about Ouija boards being super bad cause they apparently allow for possessions and it all just rings super hollow. Like Honeybourn just picked cliche evil things like the number 666 and Ouija boards without exploring them in the slightest. We're not told why these things are evil in the world, just that they are. Honeybourn relies on us, the reader, knowing that 666 and Ouija boards are evil instead of building a world where these things are serious.

The whole world in *When Life Gives You Demons* is sorta strange, because I couldn't really gauge how much this stuff actually affects people. Like apparently demon possession is quite common, but some priests don't believe in it or think their necessary. And anyone can do an exorcism with the right equipment and words, except priest do it in Latin cause it sounds cooler, I guess? I couldn't figure out if this whole exorcism thing was a secret society or just something that happens people don't talk about. One of the major subplots in this book is Shelby wanting to tell Spencer, her love interest, she's an exorcist and driving herself, and me, crazy with this internal monologue of how she wanted to tell him but was worried he'd be freaked out, which is valid. But, like, you're telling someone you're an exorcist. And maybe this is just me, but saying you're an exorcist expelling literal demons is like the coolest thing I've ever heard. So, I couldn't really get behind Shelby's train of thought.

Speaking of Spencer, my god was this kid boring. Shelby isn't that much better, but Spencer is just a wet blanket of personality. Like, he has no visible personality whatsoever outside of being afraid of heights, which I actually thought was a great scene, but everything was so bland. I couldn't understand what this guy's deal was. He had no personality. Ziltch. None. And yeah, I guess he's attractive, but my god I couldn't understand Shelby's obsession with him. What would they even talk about, because their interactions prior to exorcist-reveal was limited to awkward geometry questions and dazed silence.

I didn't need this to be *The Exorcist* of literature, but I wanted something. This was published under a romance imprint, so I was expecting romance I didn't get. It had demons in it, so I was expecting horror I didn't get. It had a campy cover, so I was expecting humor I didn't get. This book is just a void, a surface level void that didn't just leave me wanting more. It left me wanting anything.

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### **Brittany (BritReadsBooks) says**

**\*I received a copy of this title from the publisher in exchange for an honest review\***

Wow, this was a super quick read for me! The writing was light and fluffy, which I probably needed after reading so many dense books. Basically, this book is Buffy meets Supernatural, but it's more of a parody than anything. It was funny and cute overall, but not really what I expected.

Essentially this book is about a teenage exorcist named Shelby whose mother goes missing and she is stuck training with her grumpy Uncle Roy who is always criticizing her work. Throughout the book, Shelby never really gets a chance to shine and show off her skills, which was kind of sad because I thought she would be this total badass. Instead, this was more of a coming-of-age story in which she is still doubting her abilities to

exorcise demons and is also crushing hard on the new guy Spencer at school.

I'll be honest, take away the demons and you have yourself a cute boy-meets-girl story. I just wish there was more demon action and that Shelby had more of a spotlight. Uncle Roy kept stealing her thunder and I was like NO. BAD UNCLE ROY. Everyone kept trying to shield Shelby from the bad like she was some fragile little girl, but this prevented the growth of her character. In order to learn, she needs to make mistakes, and I feel like she didn't really get the opportunity to do that.

There definitely could have also been some more action scenes. The book overall kept a pretty steady pace, but I would have liked to have that 'wow' moment while reading. One thing I also feel like could have been better was the ending. It felt very low stakes to me and it was almost too easy.

Overall, a cute story filled with demons, fluff, and teen romance and I recommend it to anyone looking for a fun, light read.

3.5/5

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### **Maggie says**

I had the pleasure of reading an ARC of Jennifer Honeybourn's second novel and I feel incredibly honored to be one of the first to express my love for it! Full of laugh-out-loud moments and heart-racing exorcisms, When Life Gives You Demons will give you Buffy vibes in the best way possible. Shelby was incredibly relatable (as far as teenage exorcists go) and I could have lived inside of her world for much longer. July 2018, can you hurry up a bit so my friends and I can all gush about this book together? Thanks!

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