



Deadly Curiosities

Gail Z. Martin

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Cassidy Kincaide owns Trifles & Folly, an antique/curio store and high-end pawn shop in Charleston, South Carolina that is more than what it seems. Dangerous magical and supernatural items sometimes find their way into mortal hands or onto the market, and Cassidy is part of a shadowy Alliance of mortals and mages whose job it is to take those deadly curiosities out of circulation.

Welcome to Trifles & Folly, an antique and curio shop with a dark secret. Proprietor Cassidy Kincaide continues a family tradition begun in 1670—acquiring and neutralizing dangerous supernatural items. It's the perfect job for Cassidy, whose psychic gift lets her touch an object and know its history. Together with her business partner Sorren, a 500 year-old vampire and former jewel thief, Cassidy makes it her business to get infernal objects off the market. When mundane antiques suddenly become magically malicious, it's time for Cassidy and Sorren to get rid of these Deadly Curiosities before the bodies start piling up.

Deadly Curiosities Details

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From Reader Review Deadly Curiosities for online ebook

Mogsy (MMOGC) says

4 of 5 stars at The BiblioSanctum <http://bibliosanctum.blogspot.com/201...>

This is the second novel I've read by Gail Z. Martin and I have to say, her books have a way of wrapping around the reader like a well-loved, comfortable sweater. Prior to *Deadly Curiosities*, I've read the first book of her *Ascendant Kingdoms* series *Ice Forged*, and as traditional fantasies go, it wasn't groundbreaking but still offered enough new with the old to give me that nice, warm fuzzy feeling. Similarly, I felt good about being in familiar urban fantasy territory with her new book *Deadly Curiosities*, at the same time delighting in some of the things that made it unique.

The book stars Cassidy Kincaide, owner of an upscale antique/curio store called *Trifles & Folly* in the heart of Charleston, South Carolina. Being able to touch an object and know its history is a special psychic gift that runs in her family – an ability that comes in handy in her line of work. It's the perfect front for Cassidy and the Alliance's real work: to seek out supernatural and possibly dangerous items and weed them out of the general public before they can harm anyone. However, when reports that a number of mundane antiques are suddenly turning into "Spookies", it's up to Cassidy and her coworkers to find out what dark force is changing all these previously harmless things into haunted objects.

Without a doubt, the highlight of this book for me was the setting. No joke, I wanted to drop everything right there and then and move to Charleston. I have read urban fantasies set in a number of different places, from big cities to sleepy towns, and very few have made me feel a pull this intense. Martin captured the atmosphere perfectly, combining the fictional paranormal elements with the rich history and culture of the city, as well as the hospitality and charm of its people. I wanted to shop the antique shops, visit the museums, stay at the bed and breakfasts, even do the nighttime ghost tours and the whole shebang. Well, minus the evil demons, of course.

In the past I've also noticed that authors who go from writing epic fantasy to urban fantasy often stumble with pacing. There is definitely less of an issue with *Deadly Curiosities*. However, I did feel that sections in the middle lagged a bit, and several characters central to the strike team at the end were introduced much later than I would have preferred. Still, this was probably my one and only complaint. On the whole, this was a great story and I especially enjoyed the first part of the novel, which hooked right away with the introduction to the central premise. I also love the smooth, natural and modern voices of Cassidy and the crew. Gail Z. Martin is a natural at writing urban fantasy; you would think she's been doing this right from the start.

One interesting thing to note though, is that unlike every other urban fantasy series out there, there is a conspicuous lack of a romantic side plot for our protagonist. Whether this is a good thing or a bad thing is up to the individual reader. Those who like a bit of romance with their UF might be disappointed, while others who are neutral or don't mind something different might find it refreshing. Personally, I don't think you can force a love story; it either works or it doesn't. I would rather read an urban fantasy sans romance than one with a romance awkwardly shoehorned in just for the sake of having one, so I say good for Martin! (But for a second, I did get worried – I thought perhaps Cassidy would end up falling for Sorren, her silent business partner at *Trifles & Folly*. He's also a 500-year-old vampire. So in this case, I guess you can say I was doubly glad it did not happen. The world has enough vampire romances.)

I am, however, a little tempted to hunt down Gail Z. Martin's other Deadly Curiosity Adventure stories, from her series that spans over 500 years starring Sorren. That's what a good book does – make you want more. I do hope she has plans to continue expanding Cassidy's story as well, because this was a lot of fun. I would return to Charleston and Trifles & Folly in a heartbeat.

Mike (the Paladin) says

This book is a very mixed bag for me. As I've said before I'm always looking for a good urban fantasy. As I've also "heard" before some people who read my reviews HATE the 3 star rating as it doesn't give any real idea about some things. I mean I get it...it's middle of the road.

So, here we go. This book was recommended to me by a friend who said it "put them in mind" of the old Friday the 13th TV series. (If you don't recall it it was about two young people and an older person trying to "recover" cursed items before they did any (more) damage. That is the "set up" for the novel. I wish Ms. Martin had done more with that.

What happens here (straining not to give any spoilers) is that the book ends up with a few articles leading to a "world threatening....well, threat. What I wish she had done is take "this book" (the first in the series) to introduce us to the characters and told a story concerning the ancient shop's primary function.

But that's just me. Some readers jump right in and enjoy the story greatly.

The rest of the book is also a mixed bag. The characters are pretty good. There's no great depth yet but on the other hand they are picking up a "real feel" and I think we'll likely get to know them better over the series (actually what we have here seems to be a "series of series"). We have our narrator (Cassidy) who reveals a little about herself as we go along, then we have her co-manager of the said shop and his boy friend. The assistant/co-manager Teag is sort of a computer wizard (literally). He is constantly resorting to his computer and breaking into the "Dark Net". There's also Cassidy's dog Baxter...and her ghost dog BO. There are also a few other characters I assume will be recurring including another girl who works in the store that we meet for only a few lines.

Then (of course) there is Sorren. Sorren is a 600 year old vampire who "takes care" of Cassidy and the other people who work at Trifles & Folly (the name of the shop).

Look many of you know I'm not fond of friendly, romantic, or "nice" vampires. Okay, so Sorren isn't actually nice. He's the muscle of the group and we're led to believe he does live on human blood (I don't know if he manages to always find "bad guys" (sort of like Dexter) or if he can live on blood other than human and we just haven't been told about it. We're told he "dines" before joining our protagonists and once one of our protagonists gives him some of his blood.

So...this is another UF where the world is threatened by an evil from the past (view spoiler). You will meet ghosts, demonic things, a demon, wizards, sorcerers, Psychometry, witches, a demon hunter and all kinds of other supernatural stuff and ephemera.

Will I follow the series? I don't know (probably not unless I find myself really desperate for a UF and can't find anything better). I may read the follow up to this one but we also have a couple of other series that seem to take place in the past about Sorren and the shop's history.

I really don't know yet. I'd say try this one for yourself, it's worth that. I'm decidedly lukewarm about it, some I'm sure will love others hate it and some...maybe most for all I know be like me.

Good luck.

Julie says

I was really intrigued while reading the description for this one. What a cool idea for a book! There are tons of books out right now that have some sort of magical spin to them but this one was a bit different from the rest.

Unfortunately, it just didn't work for me. Not that the book was bad, it just lacked the finesse that I had thought it would have. I found myself getting a bit bored. That became an issue because the things that were happening, should have really made me want to tear through this book.

I think maybe that it just started off on the wrong foot for me with some acronyms in the beginning. Now, this is just an irritant for me. The rating I gave the book didn't have anything to do with the acronyms but since I did write it down in my notes, I thought I would bring it up. I just don't like weird acronyms because I think it's a waste of perfectly good writing space. Let's say you put an unknown acronym in your book. You have to write that acronym and then explain it... And then I'll probably have a horrible time trying to remember this weird acronym and I'll have to keep looking in previous text for it just so I can remind myself. And THEN, I'm going to waste a crap-ton of blog space just explaining why I can't stand acronym explanations. Le sigh.

Okay, moving this show along... I didn't get attached to any of the characters. To be honest, I had a hard time relating to anything about any of them. They felt really detached from me, from the story, from each other... It just didn't work for me at all and that's always hard to swallow. I want to love every book that I pick up, but it just doesn't work out like that most of the time.

Mieneke says

I first encountered Gail Z. Martin's *Deadly Curiosities* world in her short story *Buttons* in Jonathan Oliver's *Magic* anthology. I was immediately charmed by the premise and the characters and the consequent announcement of Solaris' acquisition of a full *Deadly Curiosities* novel was a pleasant surprise. This meant that starting *Deadly Curiosities* came with certain expectations about its setting, its characters, and its subject matter. And Martin certainly delivered on those expectations with a very entertaining tale of supernatural shenanigans, ancient ghosts returning, and the fight of Cassidy and Teag's life.

The story is set in the historic and atmospheric city of Charleston. It's clear that Martin has true love and great affection for this beautiful town and it makes the streets and buildings truly pop of the page. In Martin's *Deadly Curiosities* the supernatural is real and ghosts, demons, and immortals all wander the earth. The supernatural elements are present in the world, but most mundane mortals are unaware of their existence and there are organisations that work hard at keeping it so. One of these is the Alliance, a group of supernaturals and magically-gifted individuals that have banded together to contain the more dangerous and evil of their number. The book's protagonist Cassidy Kincaid is such a gifted individual; a psychometric, she

can read the history of objects and even places, if the emotional impressions left by their owners or occupiers are strong enough.

Cassidy is a fun main character. She's snarky and spiky with a great sense of humour. She's comfortable in her life as the owner of Trifles & Folly and the occasional remover of spooky items. She's got a great support system in her friends and neighbours, especially in her best friend and assistant Teag. To be clear, Cassidy is single, yet there is not a hint of romance in the book. The only men in her life are Teag, who's gay and in a committed relationship, Sorren, her vampire silent partner, and Baxter, her Maltese. I really enjoyed Cassidy's independent spirit, but appreciated the fact that she knew when she needed help and allowed her friends to help her. She's still relatively unschooled in her gift and as she doesn't truly have a mentor to teach her any more, this sometimes makes her gift hard to control and places her in unexpected and dangerous situations.

Cassidy's main allies in her work taming the spokes, as she calls the haunted items she comes across, are Teag and Sorren. Teag is her assistant, both in the store and her work. He has his own recently discovered gift; Teag is a Weaver, which means that he can create and weave magic using knots, webs, and cloth. But Teag is not just a Weaver, he's a Data Weaver—he's incredibly talented at manipulating the internet and other digital data connected to the World Wide Web. Sorren is the silent partner in Trifles & Folly, the partner that set up the store together with Cassidy's ancestor centuries before. I liked his paternal attitude to Cassidy, which is protective, without ever becoming patronising or creepy. Sorren is also a vampire and Martin maintains most of the traditional vampire traits: intolerance of sunlight, super strength and speed, incredible healing powers, and a thirst for blood. However, he doesn't see humans purely as food and it seems as if Martin's vampires can subsist on animal blood if necessary. He's more of an Angel character than a Spike. There is an amazing amount of history he's lived through and I'd love to learn more of it in future tales. A last character that I really enjoyed and who deserves special mention is Lucinda. She's an academic and a root woman and has a strong connection to the Loas, vodoun spirits, who she invokes for protection. She's such a warm and comforting presence in the narrative and I hope we'll see more of her in the future.

The plot of the book was well-paced. Every time Cassidy and Teag got close to solving the mystery, it turned out to be only a minor piece of the puzzle or to open up an whole new can of trouble. It allowed for Martin to reveal more and more of her world and of the supernatural elements in it without creating giant info-dumps. While the tension gets turned up every time, it also caused me to check whether I'd misremembered the number of pages left in the book, as it seemed as if the plot would be resolved in the next chapter or two. Inevitable this would be followed with a twist, which meant more problems to solve. To me this wasn't a problem, but it might be off-putting to those who dislike this sort of thing. Martin manages to work a lot of history into the book and from the author's acknowledgements in the back of the book some of the historical figures, landmarks, and events truly existed or happened.

Overall, I was charmed by *Deadly Curiosities* as I was by *Buttons* and I found myself being sucked more and more into the narrative the further we got along. The tale Martin spins us is interesting and complex. Cassidy, Teag, Sorren and the rest are wonderful characters and I hope we'll see more of them in the future. *Deadly Curiosities* is a strong opener to a new urban fantasy series, one that stands on its own beautifully, but it leaves many avenues open to explore in future books. I can only hope there'll be many more in the future.

This book was provided for review by the publisher.

Jasper says

originally posted at: <http://thebookplank.blogspot.com/2014...>

As I always say, Urban Fantasy comes in many different shapes and sizes and though some are the straightforward supernatural killing kind, those are just a small part, there are plenty of other options left and this is where *Deadly Curiosities* comes in. I read a story that somewhat had the same idea, *The Enchantment Emporium* by Tanya Huff, though there it goes more into the fae realm. With *Deadly Curiosities* Gail Z. Martin blends more of the supernatural and natural together into one great mix. If you are into fantasy the name Gail Z. Martin shouldn't have escaped you, she is the best selling author of the *Chronicles of the Necromancer* series (*Solaris*) and *Ascendant Kingdoms* (*Orbit*), *Deadly Curiosities* is her first foray into the Urban Fantasy genre and kicks off a brand new series!

As I already mentioned above Urban Fantasy has many idea's from the vampire killing kind to werewolves and the fae. However one idea where this genre can really ring true is with a shop of enchanted curiosities! This is exactly the premise that Gail Z. Martin uses in her *Deadly Curiosities*, just as with the detective kind off Urban Fantasy series like Simon R. Green's *Nightside*, there are just as many story idea's as you can devise for yourself, just make a new enchanted items and wham you have a new story, which is similar to the detective casefiles. When I visit an antique store I always wonder about the story behind it and sometimes you do stumble upon just those items that do seem a bit magical. Well, the store that Cassidy Kincaide (main protagonist of the story) runs, *Trifles & Folly*, only has these kind of oddities!

The story of *Deadly Curiosities* takes place in the town of Charleston in Southern Carolina. The antique store of *Trifles & Folly* is handed down from generation to generation and is currently run by Cassidy Kincaide, a young women who has her hands full on the odd business that goes on about her shop, however it is not so much as collecting all the oddities and curiosa for her shop it is also about neutralizing them and keeping the inhabitants of Charleston safe from them, because some of these items to harness great powers. Cassidy is part of a much larger organization one where also the previous owners of the store to part in, the Alliance. In her line of work Cassidy is aided by the gift of her family, she is able to touch items and detect and live the memories hidden within, this helps her out to identify the supernatural items. One thing is bound to happen when you run such a store and have such a job of keeping the supernatural items in control, and that is that things can go wrong, pretty badly. And this is exactly what leads Cassidy into a new job, some of the items that were bought from her store and which she neutralized, turn up to be haunted still. Cassidy and her friends now have to find out just what is going on before it's too late... Her friends though, aren't all that "normal" either... she has one good friend Sorren who is of the blood-sucking kind to start with, and in her quest she does meet up with a demon hunter as well.

What I have come to learn from Urban Fantasy stories is that you are often thrown directly into the fray, full tilt action etc. *Deadly Curiosities* in this case is more the exception than the rule. Gail Z. Martin starts off her story in a calm and relax manner and continues this all throughout the book creating a slow burning plot, this doesn't mean that *Deadly Curiosities* is a book where you will fall a sleep, more on the contrary, due to the time invested in many of the characters and the world itself it the story becomes that more gripping and interesting. And besides that there is plenty of action still taking place. I think it is best to see the story of *Deadly Curiosities* as a snowball effect, the plot start of with a minor problem that soon turns into one of major proportions. This slow burning plot produced for started a great first book with *Deadly Curiosities* but also shows that Gail Z. Martin is cleverly building up her world, characters and series one step at a time. I am sure that this is far from the last time we will see a *Deadly Curiosities* book!

Besides the slow burning plot, Gail Z. Martin uses the psychometric ability of Cassidy in an interesting way. This psychometric ability allows Cassidy to touch objects and directly see the history of said object. By this Gail Z. Martin creates these flashback moments of the history of those items and how they are involved in the whole of the story. These histories aren't only just a sum-up of a few sentences but are created to be really vivid visions sometimes involving also the narration as how Cassidy is perceiving it, this added a certain level of intenseness to the story and did allow you to interpret some of the results for yourself as to what might just be happening. It was a really nice way to immerse the reader more and more into the world.

One thing where *Deadly Curiosities* draws a major strength from are the characters. Our main protagonist Cassidy Kincaide offers a refreshing take on the typical demon hunter protagonist. From the beginning of the book you will get the feeling that Cassidy is more or less in over her head, there isn't enough money coming in to live a life of luxury or to even pay a nice check for the other colleagues or to give her a solid meal each night and this stress does weigh down on her shoulders, added to this is that she doesn't only has to keep the store running but also has to fight and neutralize the supernatural. From the description of her you can make out that she doesn't look ugly but work is getting to her and this offers her no time to really settle down and enjoy other things in life, I liked that with Cassidy's character, Gail Z. Martin evaded some of the more stereotypical personalities that women usually have in Urban Fantasy. By her hard work for the store, Cassidy has the virtues of a determined woman who does know what she wants. The other, secondary, characters that you follow are all friends and colleagues of Cassidy. For starters you have Teag. Teag is the shop managers and he and Cassidy go back a few years, he also has a few skill up his repertoire. Teag is skilled in the martial arts this is also where he and Cassidy first met and Teag has something known as Weaver magic, pretty cool stuff right there. He might seem a bit of a push over on the first take but he proves to be a deadly force when it comes down to it. Another good friend of Cassidy is the few hundred year old vampire Sorren, who got Cassidy into the Alliance to start with. The relation between Sorren and Cassidy first seems a bit distant but on closer inspection they are much more involved and Sorren has something of a protector role over Cassidy that fully comes to show in the last chapters of the book. As I said at the top of the paragraph, the major strength of the book are definitely the characters, Gail Z. Martin has created a diverse set and build fleshes them out perfectly, she gives each of them an history where we haven't seen everything from just yet...

In a guest post that featured on the blog last Monday Gail Z. Martin talked about what comes looking around the corner when switching from Epic to Urban Fantasy. For me she has done a terrific job, it's not easy, at least that is what I think to make the switch. *Deadly Curiosities* is an exciting and fresh Urban Fantasy book and series that holds a ton of promise of future stories. The idea alone of an antique/curiosity store that harbors supernatural items leads a way for me to think about just what else is possible and they are unlimited. In this first book, Gail Z. Martin has created a set of characters that grow on you, avoiding some of the more often seen tropes in Urban Fantasy makes just more of a pleasure to read about. The world in itself is contained to the town of Charleston, but this doesn't mean that the world is static, no it's constant on the move, we have only seen a small part of Charleston and in the hopefully future books to come, Gail Z. Martin will involve the reader more and more in it.

Ami says

3.5 stars

Well, first thing first ... the blurb is slightly misleading!! I thought that the story would be mainly of Cassidy

and his business partner, Sorren. But Sorren didn't appear until about 1/4 of the story and most of the times, I felt that he did things out of Cassidy's reach. Instead, Cassidy mostly gathered the information with her assistant manager, Teag. I wonder why Sorren get the bigger portion in the blurb? Is it because vampire is more someone with supernatural 'Weaver' magic??

Anyway -- for the most part, I did enjoy the story. Cassidy's psychometric talent was amazing; and Gail Z. Martin was able to interestingly blend the historical stories alongside the supernatural stuffs. Some of them were creepy as hell. I mean, the part where Cassidy must faced the evil ghost at the haunted museum part of The Historical Archive was vividly scary!! I got goosebumps just reading about it!! I also liked the way Cassidy and Teag worked on their way to find information regarding the demon and the connection between the people from long-time past.

Unfortunately, I also felt the story as rather sluggish. Maybe because Cassidy's power, to me at least, was basically 'passive'. Her power was more about getting stories from items. Teag's power as well, he was able to data bits to find information, but this was more of 'research' power. So I felt like I was missing the action. Sure, Cassidy then could use some of the magical items to attack and defend, but she wasn't really a 'warrior' in that sense. I guess after a while, reading the flashback on items that Cassidy's touched started to bore me.

It was a nice urban fantasy though -- and I'd love to read more about the team. I see that there are almost 11 short stories released in this 'world' each cost 0.99. I prefer to wait for the next novel though :)

Maria Dimitrova says

DNF @ 63%

The story is decent enough. The characters are fairly nice. And I really wanted to finish it. But once I put it down for another buddy read I just didn't feel like reading it again. And when that happened a few times I just decided to give up. Time to move on to something else.

Bob Milne says

Do you remember a great little genre show called Friday the 13th: The Series? It ran for three seasons from 1987 to 1990, and once you got past the disappointment that it had nothing to do with Jason Voorhees, it was actually a surprisingly enjoyable bit of serialized horror/drama., complete with a great cast. The basic premise of the show was that Micki and Ryan were distant cousins who inherited an shop full of cursed antiques from their Uncle Lewis. They spent the series working with Jack, an old friend of Lewis, tracking down those antiques and stopping their owners from using them for their own dark purposes.

I don't know whether Gail Z. Martin was a fan of the show, or whether she's even aware of it, but I like to think of Deadly Curiosities as a sort of spiritual sibling to that show. Here the antiques are haunted, not cursed; Cassidy and Teag rescue them, not retrieve them; cleanse them for resale, not lock them away; and are aided and abetted by a vampire, not an elderly occultist; but you get the idea.

Part mystery and part urban fantasy (with nary a hint of paranormal romance to be found), this is a book that I found lagged a little, but which was ultimately satisfying. The main characters were likable and well-

rounded, and the secondary characters jumped off the page as well, which was a pleasant surprise. Like I say, the pacing was a little slow, but it picks up when it has to, with a race to the final climactic battle.

Cassidy's psychic sensitivity to haunted objects was probably my favorite aspect of the novel, with the historical scenes of death and despair rendered vividly. Paired with the current hauntings, they create an classic ghost story feel in much of the novel. It's almost a shame that Martin had to take the story to a larger scale with the entrance of an actual demon into our realm, but it's nice to see evil confronted personally on such an epic scale. It's a story that wavers from light humor to exceptional darkness, but it's never cute/quaint or vulgar/obscene.

Familiar, accessible, and enjoyable, *Deadly Curiosities* is the kind of book to have serious crossover appeal for urban fantasy and horror readers alike.

Originally reviewed at Beauty in Ruins

Puddlyduck says

Disclaimer: I received a copy of this book from netgalley.

Deadly Curiosities is a refreshing urban fantasy set in Charleston, South Carolina. Being a Brit I am not sure how accurately the mood of this city is portrayed, but I was equally charmed and fascinated by this book's setting. This choice helped set it apart from others of its genre.

The main protagonist, Cassidy, runs her family's antique shop in order to neutralise any magical dangerous objects she comes across. She is psychometric, so this power to see visions or sense an item's energy is extremely useful. While this talent is not that rare in the fantasy genre, the author introduces a range of supernatural powers in the form of her allies and athemes (objects that lend the user a certain skill) which makes it feel unique. Her colleague and best friend Teag, for example, is a weaver and he can find threads of information on the internet, as well as creating physical patterns of power. Martin's creative approach to a well travelled genre made this book very refreshing.

Deadly Curiosities quickly settled into the story. I had to check if it was a sequel as it felt like a second book rather than the first of the series. Most characters were already in control and aware of their abilities, so there was no large 'reveal' scene. Also, Cassidy, Teag and Sorren already had a working relationship of sorts, and easily cooperated and complimented each other. Apart from Cass and Teag, who are very close, I would have liked to see more warmth and intimacy between characters thrown into increasingly dangerous encounters. One character is barely mourned later in the story, which felt a little odd.

Hopefully this will develop in Martin's future works. I look forward to another instalment!

3.5 stars

All Things Urban Fantasy says

Review Courtesy All Things Urban Fantasy

DEADLY CURIOSITIES is one scary, creepy book. I grew up with King and Koontz, so it takes a lot to scare me when I'm reading. Or, it takes demons and men who meddle with them, and characters who touch objects and fall into their dark, disturbing history.

The story starts out easy enough, just a simple pair of opera glasses gone wonky. But don't all horror stories start out on a bright, sunny day? Ah, that lovely false sense of security. DEADLY CURIOSITIES doesn't stay easy for long. Soon, Cassidy and her business partner Teag are in the thick of it and the scary ramps up to epic. Without giving too much away, the scene at the museum gave me nightmares. Teach me to read before I go to bed.

I loved every character in the story – Cassidy, Teag and Anthony, Lucinda, and most especially Sorren. Oh yeah, and I can't forget the late-entry, Chuck. He is all kinds of awesome with his no-bullshit manner. DEADLY CURIOSITIES uses magic well and not in the usual spell-casting way. Touch magic, weaver magic, athames and Voudon are spun into the story but not over-used as the cure-all to the bad guys. Magic helps, but the true power is in the user and the tenacity to keep fighting.

I'm definitely headed back into the DEADLY CURIOSITIES world when the next story comes out. There was no romance to speak of (and the fact that I loved it even without that hook should tell you something), but I do have hopes that it might someday. Could be I'm reaching, but time will tell. All I know is for the next one, I'll be reading in the light of day.

? Sh3lly - Grumpy Name-Changing Wanderer ? says

Another DNF to add to my pile for 2016. :(

At first, I thought I might enjoy this. It has a cozy mystery vibe to it and the author did a nice job of setting the scene. We've got a main character who is a psychometrist, someone who can "read" information from objects. She's got an antiques store, which is really just a front for hiding paranormal, and often haunted, objects she and her partners retrieve.

The area she lives and works in is located in an historic neighborhood in Charleston, South Carolina. So there are haunted bed and breakfasts and Voudon mambos. It's interesting. However, there is a lot of padding and filler, in my view, and it ended up making my reading experience feel tiresome. I lost interest.

The main characters are also not that interesting. There is a mysterious vampire who is not in it very much (up to 37% where I stopped). The other two main characters are pretty meh. A lot of scenes of drinking coffee and doing boring things. *shrug*

The writing is fine. If you like "cozies," those scenes of drinking coffee and making breakfast might not bore you. It also seemed like information was repeated and the same scenes of sitting around asking the same questions kept happening. Re-capping. Too much. We don't need to keep discussing what we already know. I just felt all that could have been edited out and it would have been a much better story. Just my view. Again, not a bad book, but something is missing for me. So I'm moving on. Oh well.

Buddy read attempt starting June 1, 2016 with the MacHalo group.

please be good please be good

Jessica ✿ ⇨ Silverbow ⇨ ✿ Rabid Reads-no-more says

I put this book on hold over six months ago, and at the time I was thinking that I'd give it another go . . . eventually.

And I did. Several goes, in fact. None of them ended well.

I kept hearing (over and over again) that it was "*such* an incredibly atmospheric" book . . . which is a really vague description when you think about it, but whatever.

A couple bloggers did clarify that claim, and I was lead to believe that Martin brought Charleston, SC to life-that you could feel the history, see the old plantation manors, taste the salt in the air . . .

Pfft.

This isn't the first, and I'm sure it won't be the last, time I've been disappointed by claims of a book's Southernness, but in this case it was particularly disappointing, b/c I love Charleston (<-----probably also the reason it didn't work for me).

I don't like to speak in absolutes . . . BUT . . . I'm going to say, *absolutely*, that authors not-from-the-South should stop writing novels that are going to be marketed as Southern.

And I don't feel bad about that absolute, b/c I would never try to write a book that captured life in New England.

Why not?

B/c like a non-native language speaker, I would inevitably miss my mark despite my best intentions, b/c NOT A NEW ENGLANDER. *bangs head against wall*

BUT.

That wasn't my only problem.

I was also bored out of my friggin' mind.

Cassidy (the heroine) has a very specific type of psychometry: she can tell if an object has supernatural qualities. Kind of like all the crap in Warehouse 13.

And that by itself is kind of cool.

She works in conjunction with others (also like Warehouse 13) to neutralize these objects, and keep the mass population both safe and in the dark about the existence of such objects.

The problem is that the first object that Cassidy inspects droned on for page after page about an opera fire (in early 20th century Chicago, I think), and halfway through the flashback, I started shrieking, "I don't care, I don't care, I DON'T CARE!" in my head. Literally. B/c BORED.

And I don't know about you, but an opera house fire in early 20th century Chicago sounds pretty dang exciting.

And yet . . .

You remember how Hermione (or maybe Harry? One of them anyway) lamented how interesting History of Magic would be if the class wasn't simply Professor Binns droning on and on in a monotone about the Goblin Wars?

It was kind of like that.

So I quit. *shrugs*

Rachel says

Hot potato soup. That's what I kept thinking about while I read this book. Why? Well, because something about this story was comforting. That's probably not what one would expect from a book like this and it certainly wasn't what I expected. So allow me to explain...

From my first glance at the cover and a quick skim of the blurb I expected typical PNR/UF fare. I anticipated a love triangle between a nubile young heroine and the two sexy men flanking her. I mean, do you see those guys on the cover?? Nice! Well, let me stop you right there... There is no love triangle in this book. Yay! Unfortunately, there is no "love line" or even a single "love coordinate." Let me be plain. With the exception of the sideline relationship of Teag and Anthony (as is sometimes, sadly, the case for us ladies, the gorgeous brunette specimen on the cover is gay), there is no romance in this story. None.

I think that is one of the reasons I found this book so comforting. I didn't have to deal with the often roller-coaster emotions that come from a UF heroine taking on whatever central danger the author has cooked up while also coping with the often demanding attentions of a boarish alpha male. The focus of this story remained firmly centered on the supernatural developments and the underlying mystery surrounding Charleston, SC. I was able to enjoy the fantasy aspect of an Urban Fantasy with little or no distractions.

The plot is reasonably predictable, when the Scooby Gang of Cassidy, Teague, and Sorren needed a clue a clue seemed to magically present itself, the climax was climactic but not entirely unexpected... None of this is a complaint though! It was nice to read a straight-forward story without having to anticipate twists or turns. I think that is the other reason I found this story comforting: simply because the book was fun, almost fluffy. That is kind of a strange thing to say given the gruesome nature of the scenes described by Martin. Believe me there were a lot of moments in the book where I thought "Oh my God!" This book is definitely not for the faint of heart. While there is no sex or even sensual kissing in the book, I would not consider it a book for younger readers. But neither would I rank it as adult UF. Maybe some where in between? It reminded me a little bit of Rick Yancey's *The Monstrumologist*. Dark, frightening, but not quite adult.

I didn't get a sense of a larger series arc from this book or really much of an idea of the world in which these characters existed. I think there is a lot of room for Martin to expand on the characters and the overall story, otherwise there is the danger that the series will become episodic. Compare it to Supernatural's "ghost of the week" format. But even Sam and Dean had a larger, season-long goal to keep the viewer coming back. I would want more out of this series than Cassidy, Teag, and Sorren fighting a different demon in every book. Hopefully the next book in the series delves deeper in the mythology of the Alliance and the Family.

Yzabel Ginsberg says

[I got an ARC through NetGalley, in exchange for an honest review.]

Hard to tell whether I liked it, or found it simply "OK", so let's consider this a 2.5 stars.

There are a lot of good ideas in this novel. About the magical community (the Alliance isn't so big, the Family is likely to become a pain in the neck at some point). About the various kinds of magic, that I haven't seen used that often in urban fantasy yet (weaving magic and psychometry, that is). About items and how they can become beacon of positive or negative energies. It goes to show that even the most inconspicuous little things can be harbingers of danger. And a store full of antiques, acting as cover for the magic folk to gather those special items and prevent them from falling into the wrong hands? Quaint and delightful—much like the town of Charleston, for which I could get quite a good feeling through the many little stories. (One of the secondary characters works in the historical archives. I tell you, you always need to know someone who works in a museum or something. Always.)

Another thing I liked was that, for once, there was no romance here. I don't dislike romance, but sometimes I find there's too much of it in UF in general, and it can more easily detract from the darkness and magic. Here, I didn't want to read about a love story: I wanted to read about the antique shop, the mysterious items, Cassidy's power, and so on. And this is what I got. So I was glad.

Unfortunately, this novel just didn't click with me. I'm not even sure why exactly. I liked the ideas, the characters seemed interesting, but I never connected with them. I don't think we get to see Sorren before the 30% mark, if I remember well, which I found too bad. As for the demon hunter, (view spoiler). Yes, I'm a masochist. I know.

Regularly enough, I also found myself a little bored. It may have been because of the writing style: usually good when it came to descriptions of places, or to the stories passed around regarding the town and its inhabitants, but somewhat clunky in other parts. Examples would include repeated uses of the same first name in three consecutive short sentences, or some dialogue lines basically stating the same thing twice in a row. At first, I didn't really notice it, but after a while, it started weighing down the narrative. The pace was perhaps a little too slow as well, though I can't tell if this was because of the aforementioned style, or if it was just sluggish.

I'd place this novel among the ones that aren't uninteresting, and could blossom into a good series; however, so far, I'm not really convinced.

Marta Cox says

At first, I thought I might enjoy this and it's a new author to me so always worth discovering . I liked the cover and the synopsis intrigued me. I was happily enjoying the author setting the scene as it makes the story feel more real. Our heroine Cassidy is a psychometrist, someone who can "read" information from objects which is always a pretty cool ability and her antiques store was a good cover for all that came after. Unfortunately Cassidy starts having quite a bit of trouble with her powers and needs her friends to help out. Yes it had an almost ensemble feel and if there's romance it's perhaps a little on the back burner. An atmospheric piece with evil to watch out for but I'm not sure it reached its full potential but it's the first in a new series so the only way is up!

Three and a half from me

Katrina says

This was so much better than I was expecting it to be. The only reason this doesn't get 5 stars from me is that Cassiy was somewhat annoying at times. If she's had these psychic skills for her whole life, then why was she so scared to touch absolutely everything? I would think she would have a handle on controlling it by the time she was 26. I loved everything else about this book, but I just really wasn't a fan of Cassidy.

Lynsey (A Bookish Life) says

Deadly Curiosities was a really enjoyable urban fantasy and one that, unbelievably, I even forgive for having absolutely no romance. This is positively unheard of for me as I usually insist on at least a sprinkle of romance in any book that I read, but most especially in my urban fantasies as I love the slow burn of a romance that evolves over several books (think Kate and Curran!). And who knows? Maybe that will be the case with this series too, eventually, but I was struggling to find any hint of where it might come from in this first instalment.

That said, I'm doing it a disservice even dwelling on that aspect for a second since the plot was so strong that I barely even registered its lack, in truth.

The story revolves around Cassidy, a twenty-something antique store owner with psychometric talents. Cassidy was quite a passive heroine if you ask me - particularly as UF ones tend to go. Definitely not one I would describe as badass, which may count as a negative for some readers. Her strength, in my opinion, comes from her intelligence and bravery, despite lacking any obvious or traditional UF heroine-type *mad skillz* or even a particularly outlandish personality. I see her as the kind of quiet, steadfast heroine that grows on you slowly. Only time will tell though, of course.

The story arc for *Deadly Curiosities* picks up when Cassidy's gift starts acting more like a curse. Intensifying and sometimes even rendering her completely incapacitated. The quest to discover why leads her, and her colourful crew of friends, on a hunt for the source, with plenty of action scenes along the way to keep readers skipping along nicely.

In sum, if you love a good paranormal mystery with a great ensemble cast, you should absolutely pick this one up!

4 Stars ★★★★★

A copy of this book was provided by the publisher in exchange for an honest review.

Ms. Nikki says

The pacing made me think "cozy mystery" while the actual story contained Urban Fantasy elements that I feel would have been better suited if the story wasn't so wordy. I feel as if the story was weighed down and that I had to slog through non-essential descriptors to get to the good parts.

I don't know if I like the author's writing style or not. The details were interesting when talking about the antiques, but not so much with the dialogue and introspective sections. It was kinda like listening to a boring history professor.

I reserved judgment on reading anything else by this author until I acquire more evidence.

Just an "okay" read that had a lot of potential.

I was given an ARC in exchange for a honest review

XX Sarah XX (former Nefarious Breeder of Murderous Crustaceans) says

● Let's See how Crappy this One is Buddy Read (LShCtOsBR™) with My MacHalos of the Despicable Book Taste (MMotDBT™) ●

? **DNF at 35%**. *And it's a miracle I made it that far.*

Because **Cozy Urban Fantasy** is almost as crappy as **Freaking Paranormal Romance**. But hey, at least the author got the **title of the book** right. Because, let me tell you, it doesn't get **deadlier** than this. Hell no, it doesn't. This book is deadly **boring**. And deadly **uninspired**. And deadly **uninteresting**. AND deadly **flat**. So much deadly stuff, it's a wonder **I'm still alive**.

» **And the moral of this Crappy Non-Review (CNR™) is:** I rest my case. Bye now.

Come on, Edward, let's bail.

Eureca Laurice says

Deadly Curiosities will enthrall you first, if your reading stride is different. In my case, long hiatus of reading. I still have 2 books that I have started like 2 months ago and not yet finish but when I started this, well it took me a month almost, but the problem was in me.

Oh man, I forgot how to write now; I might end up writing a journal here instead of a review. I will try my best, *silent cheering* Fighting!

Deadly Curiosities was set on a town somewhere in the US named Charleston, forgive me for any misinformation for I am only retelling it thru what I remember on the story.

Charleston is known for its History, tourist come and goes because of its richness on it. But what accompany its history is a dark past that linger on the place and even things.

Cassidy our narrator is a part owner of an antique shop named Trifles and Folly, she has a psychometric power that could experience things by touching it. Alongside her is her assistant Teag, he is a weaver a magical thingy also and a vampire, Sorren, her co-owner.

I never much read about vampires that doesn't involve love story, surprisingly this story don't have that. Well except for Teag and his partner Anthony. I like how it was written that way.

The Story

Trifles and Folly is just a front, for Cassidy and friends their true objectives is to separate bad mojo things to good ones. They sell the good ones of course and the bad ones? well they have to extinguished the bad mojo in it, and if they can't? well they are part of an Allies that might know how extinguished it.

And one day all the mild things from before is starting to go crazy, they have been alarmed that someone or something is triggering it. And of course they are right, some demon is goin stronger and stronger and feed from people.

It got them hard, they didn't know how it was happened, all things just starting to go wild, they needed help from Allies, they needed the connection on how, what and why it is happening. It was revealed that Charleston History is really crazy, well whose history is not [crazy] right? We all have been there. It's just a matter of how we survived.

The Settings

I love History. I love how Charleston was set on my mind, the Trifles and Folly, the Navy Yard, the theater.

"I felt a rush of excitement as we walked into the Academy. The theater lobby had been painstakingly refurnished to its glory days. From the big, retro lit-up marquis outside to the old-style concession stand, plush red carpets, and velvet upholstered seats, the Academy Theater was quiet a showplace.

...

Everything screamed Victorian abundance, from the lush burgundy velvet curtains and the plush carpet to the crystal chandeliers, gilded decorations and huge mirrors."

I have never been to theater this nice, and for the record I think we don't have this kind of theater here, theater that is known to me. Lucky bishes has this.

To Navy Yard that has: crumbling roads, rubble buildings, think of an abandoned place.

Charleston I think from this story is an interesting place.

Down Side and Characters of the Story:

Cassidy with her power proved that she's the rightful heir to the Trifles and Folly and its back work. Her power is the most useful among them, she was born to it. In the story Cassidy was well usually saved by people around her, I felt a little special snowflakes on her and the manipulation of story thru her. But she's not a hating person; I do like her, for her courage and goodness.

Teag, Cassidy's assistant, if I remember it well Teag is some kind of genius because of his power, he is a weaver. Those who weave information that the usual normal people can't attain, I think it was more of a Cracker/Hacker. His power never really had a green light to me. It's confusing, it was not just the hacker thing; he has other capability that is in connect with being a weaver. But I also like Teag

Sorren, the vampire. Sorren appear occasionally and well he is a vampire your usual vampire. Except that he's not in love with Cassidy, vice versa.

Lucinda, the Loan practitioner. It's my first time reading this type of Voodoo like magic (sorry, I don't know on what category it has to fall, it must have mention but I forgot about it). Well Lucinda is not your traditional type of magic user; she is a professor, a sponsor and also your regular spell chanter.

The story tends to lose you on the process for its slow pace, info dumping, but you might like it, like I did.

Overall, it is an enjoyable read for a long page.

Overall rating:

3/5
