



Matchbox Girls

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For a thousand years, the half-breed nephilim have kept the angels and Fallen from meddling in the world. And the angels would do anything to change that. Destroy cities. Turn oceans to blood. Raise the dead. Sacrificing two powerful little girls should be easy.

Except... the two little girls are protected by one mortal woman.

Haunted by visions of catastrophe and crippling anxiety attacks, Marley Claviger has never heard of any celestial cold war. But when the twin daughters of a friend come to her for help, she will do whatever it takes to save them. Even if it means working with Fallen, discovering the nephilim, and facing the source of her power.

Matchbox Girls Details

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From Reader Review Matchbox Girls for online ebook

Kiva says

This is an atypical urban fantasy. As much as it's a story about sexy supernatural bad-asses wielding the weapons of Creation at each other, it's also a story about parents and children, and learning to take responsibility for others. If you like urban fantasy with actual substance to it, you should read this book.

There are no vampires. There are, however, angels and demons. The book also features one of the best smart-ass villain/anti-hero characters I've read.

(Note: my review is based on the unedited, pre-publication version of this book; I was the book's alpha reader.)

Gar says

Urban fantasy from an author I sort of know, in an online sense; years and years ago we both were on a roleplaying MUD based on the White Wolf's "World of Darkness" setting. At that time in the newish interwebs, there were a lot of those around. The one I spent time on was notable primarily because the administrative staff insisted upon people actually being able to write in a way that showed basic grasp of spelling and grammar, and also because it didn't involve a sea of BDSM bars that people would type about walking into in their trenchcoats and katanas. (Trenchcoats and katanas being the 90's era World of Darkness equivalent of putting on one's robe and wizard hat, you see.)

Anyway, I bring that up because I think the WoD and rpg-world influence in general shows in the book. It's an original setting mind you, but it has that kind of rpg-world feel to it. Umpteen supernatural folks of different origins and powers and different power sources and mention of different schools of magic and passing references to different levels of jargon-souls (numina and spirit and chakras and whatnot) and people having access to the Backworld jargon plane and being able to manipulate The Geometry jargon substructure, and organizations with technomagical geegaws and Hushes and Covenants and so forth. Angels and demons and nephilim and "kaiju"/* and secret pasts. All of which I don't really find terribly interesting on its own anymore.

There is, however, no swooning over vampires, sparkly or otherwise, and things move along at a brisk clip despite all the world-jargon flair on all the characters. I enjoyed it overall, so using the IMDB user rating scale, I'm going to declare it the best book ever. (If I hadn't enjoyed it overall, it would contrariwise be the worst book ever.)

* This was hands-down the most distracting element in the book. There were allegedly incredibly powerful and hostile supernatural critters much worse than demons, and they got termed kaiju. And yes, the term means "big monster" roughly, so sure, but dammit, kaiju are Godzilla and Monster Zero and all those guys. Kaiju are not and never will be dark smirking guys. I will die upon this hill, and die proudly.

Lori {Romancing the Dark Side} says

3.5 stars

**I received a complimentary copy of this book in exchange for an honest review. This does not affect my opinion of the book or the content of my review.*

I didn't really know what to expect when I picked up MATCHBOX GIRLS but after being introduced to Marley and the twins I knew I had to go along for the ride!

The story starts off innocently enough when Marley Claviger receives a phone call from her friend's twin nieces, who inform her their uncle is "missing" and need her help. Soon after that phone call, Marley learns her friend Zachariah has entrusted her with his children, who are being hunted by supernatural beings. With the help of her friends and some unlikely powerful allies, Marley will stop at nothing to keep two innocent little girls safe who are caught in the midst of a heavenly war. Just another day in her chaotic life...

Those of you who know me, know I love a fierce heroine in my books. While Marley isn't a sword wielding bad ass, she's a tough-cookie! When we're first introduced to her character we see a young woman who struggles with anxiety and visions, not your average heroine. I really enjoyed seeing her transformation into a more confident and self-assured character who's driven to protect those most important to her. Her flaws make her believable and really allow you to connect with her, especially when she's interacting with the two four year old little girls. It's hard to not root for her when you know everything she's dealing with!

Moving onto the twins... Kari and Lissa are a handful at times and it was fun to watch a young woman with no prior experience try her best to keep them safe in a chaotic environment. I feel the girls and Marley complimented each other perfectly and I love their bond. They were just as confused and frustrated as Marley but were real troopers through it all. I was a little worried about the children being portrayed as whiny or annoying characters, but Chrysoula pulls it off beautifully, they're smart, funny, endearing and scary powerful!

MATCHBOX GIRLS is a refreshing take on the Urban Fantasy genre, incorporating numerous supernaturals, in a very human world. The constant threat of danger keeps you on the edge of your seat and wanting more by the books end. I feel that going into more detail would give the story away, so I'm trying my best to convey my thoughts sans spoilers (not as easy as it seems!). With its phenomenal character development, world building and page turning action, MATCHBOX GIRLS superseded my expectations, I can't wait to delve into the next installment, *INFINITY KEY*. If you're a fan of angels, demons and unconventional heroines, this is definitely worth a read!

Mikaela says

I received this book as part of a Kickstarter pledge. Since I was in an Urban Fantasy slump, I didn't read it

immediately. Which I regret, since this is a really good Urban Fantasy novel. The intriguing worldbuilding takes the standard tropes of angels, demons and fairies, and twists them around a couple of times, until the end result is something unique. The writing starts with a bang, or a phone call to be more correct, and it doesn't slow down. Marley's reaction to the events were refreshing. She isn't a kick ass heroine, she is just an woman who wants to return to her normal life.

The plot is just as fast paced as it should be, and when you think that nothing else can go wrong for Marley and her friends, something unexpected, yet totally logical happens, that turns an already dire situation into a catastrophic situation.

But what made this book for me were the cast of characters. All of them were deliciously flawed. From Marley with her shambled life, to Zacharias with all his secrets, to the impulsive twins, to the new friends she gets in Corbin and AT. And Neath.. I loved Neath. She behaved like I imagine a cat should. The bad guys were scary. Brr. I wouldn't want to be alone with either Severin, Tarn or any of the other bad guys.

What keeps me from giving this book an A is the sparseness of description. It stopped me from imaging the settings to the level I wanted, and needed to get really sucked into the book.

Still, I'll definitely get the sequel, since I believe in supporting good authors. And Chrysoula Tzavelas is definitely one of them.

Arlena says

Chrysoula Tzavelas did get my attention with her novel "Matchbox Girls."

This author was able to make one feel like they were with her in every move in the story. The story opens when Marley Claviger awakens from a frantic phone call from two scared twins that needed her help. Their uncle Zachariah

was missing and Marley soon found out that she was to care for the twins until he was found.

The story was full of excitement of one disaster after the other and was played out in so many celestial surprising ways.

It was interesting how the author was able to get all of these mysterious figures together in this book using supernatural powers, Tinker Chime, Ettoriels, Nephilim, Geometric Sight, Glamour, Kaiju, Spirit Tether, Tibbernauf, and Lullaby Spears. If you want to know what those are you will have to read this book!

There were wonderful characters in "MatchBox Girls" along with Marley, Lissa and Kari(the twins), Zachariah(the uncle), Neath, (the cat) Branwyn, Penny,(her friends), Corbin, AT, Jeremy, Severin, Tarn, and I am sure I have probably left some other important one out that one will find an exciting read.

If you would like a real fantasy you will like this one.....I found "Matchbox Girls" a very good read. Back to Top Logged

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Sarah says

I wasn't sure I would like this book, but Kate insisted that I would love it and she was right. I fell head-over-

heels early on and haven't looked back.

Similar to Pilgrim of the Sky, another C&G book I fell absolutely in love with, *Matchbox Girls* features a main character who is not at her best when we meet her, but becomes more than she thought she could be by the end. Marley's anxiety feels real, not a mere character flaw or plot device, but *real* -- the kind that sits on your chest and closes your throat until your heart is pounding too fast and you can't even think anymore. It's one of the many little details in Chrysoula Tzavelas's deft storytelling that make you want to believe her, to believe in her story.

This is a book in which our heroine is forced to deal with several different and frequently conflicting characters, events, and versions of events. It becomes a heady whirlwind for Marley and so, too, for the reader. We know what Marley knows, perhaps a breath more, keeping pace with her instead of being a step or two ahead. Marley has to choose what to believe and who to trust on the spur of the moment, and so do we. I enjoy this narrative style, but it's not for everyone.

The plot is action-y, but also character-driven, if that makes sense. There are the action parts: running, hiding, fighting! ... but the characters are the real gems of the story, multifaceted and flawed and cursed like diamonds.

Chris Gwinn says

I was a little apprehensive about picking this up. I've known the author since high school and hadn't read anything she'd written since then. What if I hated it? I've hated friends' books before. And it's full of fairies and magic children and angels. Oh s***. I'm going to hate this and have to pretend I don't.

What I had forgotten to keep in mind is that Chrysoula's smart and talented and just as bored by the cliches of contemporary fantasy as I am. And it took about 10 pages to get from concerned to "hey, this is pretty good", followed shortly by "wait, I genuinely like this". And I stayed there all the way to the end.

The kids feel like kids, not like miniature plot devices. The protagonist isn't "a conflicted magic wielding female who kills big bad" as another friend of mine disparaged other fantasy novel protagonists.

It's a great first novel. If there's a sequel, I'll read it.

Lorena says

Es un libro que se disfruta bastante y si tuviera la oportunidad de leer el segundo lo haría, sobretodo porque quisiera saber qué es lo que pasa con Branwyn. Tranquilos... no es spoiler ;) Espero D:

Por cierto, casi se me pasa de mencionar que el romance es prácticamente nulo en este libro. Si bien hay un par de chispitas entre dos personajes y estas definitivamente se dieron muy apresuradas, creo que es algo más que hay que rescatar del libro porque últimamente hay todo un 'boom' de meter amor como sea en todo libro y o a veces lo hacen para nada creíble o llega a aburrir ver lo mismo en toda historia.

RESEÑA COMPLETA AQUÍ

Deirdre Murphy says

I won Matchbox Girls in an online drawing. The original cover, drawn in an unusual style, drew my attention right away. The story more than lives up to the cover. It's quirky and enjoyable, starting with an old trope (the troubles resulting when angels crossbreed with humans) but the world is original and interesting. The girls are adorable and I was rooting for the protagonist, Marley, from the very first line, when she wakes up to answer an urgent call moments before her phone starts to ring.

As the book opens, Marley has more than enough trouble keeping her own life in order. She's on medication to keep her hallucinations—all visions of disaster—and anxiety attacks under control, and her occasional writing jobs don't really bring in enough money to pay her share of the rent.

So she's shocked when the tiny twin nieces of an attractive male friend call to say he told them to call her if he ever disappeared. The girls insist their uncle vanished in his study shortly after answering his phone, which is, of course, totally preposterous. Still, the girls are scared, so she struggles into her blue-jeans and rushes out into Los Angeles traffic to go reassure them. Wildfires are burning in the hills, and the ominous glow and haze of smoke adds a sense of danger to the simple act of driving.

When she arrives, Zachariah's car is in the driveway, but he's not there. A search of his study discloses his cell phone and a strange roll of papers, the words either encrypted into strange letter-shapes or in a language Marley had never seen before. The girls want to get out of the house, saying it's creepy there! Things start getting stranger. It's little things at first—a book disappearing, and one of the twins opening the locked door of Zachary's car so they can get their car seats. (They insist they can't ride in Marley's car without their seats, so they trust her with a secret they haven't even shared with Uncle Zach.)

The strangeness accelerates as Marley's visions return, and she becomes convinced that the twins will only be safe if they are with her. The wildfires in the hills grow ever closer to LA; a sinister lawyer threatens Marley, telling her that kidnapping is a crime; and she starts to have strange dreams. Then a variety of strange people show up, some trying to claim the girls and others acting to help Marley protect them.

At some point, Marley realizes she's forgotten her medicine—but too many strange things have happened by that time for her to believe she's just hallucinating. Besides, the twins and her best friends have seen strange things too, and she is more and more certain with each passing hour that she's somehow protecting the twins just by being with them.

As with real life, when answers to some of Marley's questions start to appear, they just raise more questions. The action moves forward at a good pace, blending danger and mystery in good measure as the story builds to a climax.

I liked this book. I think you will too.

Rebecca says

Urban fantasy with angels and halfbloods running around the world is nothing new, but Tzavelas manages to bring some fresh energy to the genre. Marley is a mess of social anxieties and aimlessness, and her two best friends are only slightly more on top of their game. Watching Marley pull herself together as she puzzles through situations that she would have sworn would have broken her has a poignancy and an urgency that keeps the pages turning.

The twin girls are particularly well written--it's really hard to write small children convincingly, and I think Tzavelas pulls it off without making them too precocious or too condescended to. The girls are crazy powerful, but have no idea how to use that power or what it means. They stumble around as blindly as Marley does, alternating being endearing and kind of terrifying. It's the right balance.

We end the book with a lot of questions left. It's clear that we're being set up for a sequel, and I'm eager awaiting it. I'd like to see more of Marley and her world, and find out a little more about what the heck is going on. That said, I think a little more info at this stage would have been nice--there are just too many threads dangling. Still, the worldbuilding is solid, the characters are engaging, and the action is inventive. A great start to what I hope is a series.

Julie says

This book was not at all what I expected. Fairies, Angels, Demons, Mortals, all in conflict over twin girls for reasons none of them are certain.

I liked this book because I get tired of the same stereotypical archetypal roles - angels are good, demons are bad, faeries are mischievous. This book really tured all of those on their heads. Each of the characters is motivated differently and good and evil is really dependent on where you stand in terms of your motivation. I am usually not one who likes ambiguity in a book - I like to read fast and have things spelled out for me, but I was very comfortable with the unknown in Matchbox girls. It created enough mystery to keep me interested without being so deep as to irritate me. (I'm such a shallow reader!!!)

I loved that there were strong female characters - MANY of them, and I look forward to the next book in this series.

I think this book is worth a second read, there's a LOT of detail and a LOT subtlties between the relationships that would bear another (deeper) look. I'm usually not one for reading a book a second time but I would absolutely read this one again without hesitation.

A Book Vacation says

This is a very intense story with great world building and characterization. Marley, a young woman struggling to keep herself afloat, suddenly finds herself in the midst of a battle between good and evil, throwing her already chaotic life into even more disarray.

I thoroughly enjoyed Marley's character, especially as she matures throughout the story, going from a woman full of anxiety to a more self-assured person willing to do anything to protect those she cares about. She is a very believable character, and I loved that she is flawed, just like the rest of humanity. It was refreshing to have a genuine heroine that wasn't always sure of herself and was afraid, and yet persevered to do what is right. Having no previous dealings with children, it was also comical to see her interact with the four-year-old twins who are being sought after by a band of sinister creatures. Marley's inexperience shines

through as she tries to figure out what to do with the girls, what to feed them, how to communicate with them—and as if this isn't anxiety provoking enough for Marley, the girls uncanny abilities, and the abilities of those attempting to take the girls from Marley, all add to this enticing story.

Now, the young girls do see a lot of things that no child should ever see, and some readers may find this a bit jarring—especially as the children become extremely distraught on many an occasion, worried that the adults in their lives will abandon them as everyone seems to have already done. It's a bit heartbreaking, and I definitely thought, many a time, that these girls were witnessing way too much to come away unscathed, and my heart hurt for them. Although a fantastical story, Tzavelas gives her characters and their feelings extreme human qualities, which, in my opinion, makes it a very well written story and the girls are an interesting pair, adding depth to the story.

I really enjoyed the otherworldly feel of this novel as well. While good and evil converge on Marley's world, confusing her beyond belief, the author creates an amazing array of action sequences as Marley finds herself on the run. Unsafe and scared, Marley must trust people she wouldn't normally give the time of day, and rely on them to keep the girls, and herself, safe. This is a really good read...

To see my full review upon release (2/20/12):

<http://bookvacations.wordpress.com/20...>

April Steenburgh says

It starts out mundane enough- a call from the children of an acquaintance asking Marley to come over, that their uncle is missing and they were told to call her should anything happen. The mundane ends there, shifting seamlessly into a world peopled with angels, demons, and their offspring- all of which seem to have an unhealthy interest in the kids Marley now finds herself in charge of, and determined to protect. A celestial war is unfolding, and the children are at the center of it all.

What caught me first about the book is the reality of Marley's anxiety problem. As someone who has struggled with anxiety, the writing rang so very true, and made Marley not only a flawed and human character, but really someone I was rooting for on a very personal level. I cheered every triumph and winced in sympathy every time she stumbled. For someone with an anxiety disorder, it is sometimes an overwhelming feat to do something as basic as get behind the wheel and drive to work. To see Marley work through that and carry the book to its conclusion was magnificent.

I also became very attached to Marley's friends, Penny and Branwyn. Their friendship is so tangible and true- it made me want to make some phone calls to friends I have accidentally neglected while life has been busy distracting me.

Tzavelas also has the benefit of having her fae and celestial beings act inhuman, something I adore in any books those forces appear in. On one hand there are the fae, the celestials, and the demons. On the other, the humans. Caught in the middle are the crossbreeds. The mistakes. The Nephilim. And it is in the dual nature, that sense of being caught between that twists through the Nephilim characters, where Tzavelas' writing really shines. Here is an author who has a grasp on that anxious tension that results from being neither here nor there, and trying to figure out where and how you belong. Matchbox Girls is a book about twisting your

own fate from the threads we are given at birth, and it is a splendid journey.

Amy Eye says

Who knew two little girls could change your whole life - especially when they aren't even yours!!

This book started off pretty slow for me, but by about page 30, I was really into it. Unfortunately, I think the author tried to go too in depth with some of the explanations of things - the site that was given to Marley for instance. I think there could have been a better way to describe what she was seeing, how she saw it, and how she did it. But as it was, I had to read and reread it several times to get a general idea, and even then I was left scratching my head in places.

The great part about this section though was that the action was really getting GOOD! AT is my favorite character, her spunky attitude and dogs are the perfect compliment to Marley, who is not outgoing, but a loyal and good person.

Enter the fairies...this is where I lost some interest in the book. I could see it coming with the hints that were thrown in from the start of the book, but I just don't feel like this part of the book delivered, and I think the magic kitty was a bit predictable as well. But it adds a cute element to the story, which is always a nice thing to have as well.

Overall, it was an entertaining read. I would recommend it to someone who is looking for something new to try, but it wouldn't be one I would put on my "Harry Potter shelf" (My all-time favorites...LOL).

I received this book for free on LibraryThing in exchange for an honest review.

April says

Right! This book is a Kickstarter project I recently backed that has turned out to be one of the best books I have read in a very long time. The characters are real and engaging, the mythos is believable and intriguing, the story line keeps you turning pages and guessing throughout the entire book. You have to love a book that lets you giggle at the antics of very powerful demons while still feeling afraid and worried for the characters because their antics don't detract from how dangerous they are. Very well written, and very well edited I gobbled this book up in short order without even realizing how quickly it was reading. I found the world and its mythology very believable and am curious to see what will become of the twins as they grow up!

I thoroughly enjoyed this tale about two small children and their unlikely guardian and am giving it 5 out of 5 stars! I can't wait to see what this author will do next!
