



Don't Judge a Book By Its Magic

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Colleen is a normal girl. She loves shoes, chick flicks, and cute clothes. The only thing abnormal about her is that she's just become a magician; not the disappearing bunny kind, but the power-shooting-out-of-your-hands kind of magician.

Her problem now is that she doesn't believe in magic. Well, she believes in it. She's seen it shoot out of her own hands, but she opposes it in a moral sense; no hexes, no spells, no incantations, no potions, no amulets, no tomes, no casting circles, no eye of newt, none of that. She has to be very clear because people pressure her about it. Whatever they say about "how it's done," this is a morality issue for her and she will not cave in to their pressure.

Join Colleen at Seattle Pacific Regional University, where she becomes a part of The Convergence. She'll learn the freaky side of Work Study, Financial Aid, and Vyxhepiocht. Seriously, she's never seen so many hot guys. It's going to be wild!

Don't Judge a Book By Its Magic Details

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From Reader Review Don't Judge a Book By Its Magic for online ebook

Iola says

After discovering a strange book (imaginatively called 'The Book') in her local library, Seattle high school graduate Colleen Underhill starts seeing visions. Her first thought is that she has gone insane. She soon finds out that she is 'broadcasting' and gets into trouble when she won't say a simple spell to prevent this, because taking part in magic and witchcraft is against her Christian faith.

Colleen is immediately whisked away to Seattle Pacific Regional University ('sproo' to the students), where she learns that Tximar energy flows through everyone, like the concept of Chi energy, but is like the old Magic eye books in that it can't be seen by everyone. Reading The Book has unleashed this previously-unknown power in her (unfortunately, The Book is never mentioned after the beginning, which seemed a bit strange in hindsight). It is working in the spirit realm, but even the professors are unsure what spirits—which makes Colleen even more reluctant to use spells.

What follows is Colleen's first-person account of her first months at Sproo, learning about Teimnydduus and Txenar, adjusting to the new rules, joining the Sproo version of a sorority, getting her first boyfriend, singing in the music show and working out how to deal with unexpected financial issues.

It's well-written with believable characters, a well-thought-through back story, an interesting plot and some very good imagery (e.g. "her shoes resembled government building architecture"). It's a quick and enjoyable read, incorporating elements of the worlds of Harry Potter and Percy Jackson, but there were some problems.

The first problem is the language. As in other fantasy books, the author has invented a range of words to describe concepts outside our everyday reality. But these aren't words like 'muggle' or 'hobbit' that are easily written and pronounced in English. These words look like a combination of Welsh and Anglicised Greek, words like 'Skupdyn' and 'tiemnydduus'. I have no idea how to even begin pronouncing that. Is the 'dd' a 'th' sound, as it is in Welsh, or a 'dd' as it is in English words like 'hidden'? (At one point, Colleen comments that many of the words were 'spit-rich', indicating to me that the language is definitely Welsh.)

The author does at least acknowledge this problem, saying "The author spelled all the terminology in the book so outrageously. It felt like the author wanted to mess with his readers by making up names for things that were impossible to pronounce." There was a glossary at the beginning, but this is easier to access in a paper book than an ebook. The story got very interesting very quickly, and trying to work out which T-word was what was confusing and just slowed the story down.

Did it work as a Christian novel? Yes, and no. While there was nothing anti-Christian, it changed tack part-way through, moving away from the spiritual aspect of The Convergence into a teenage dating and relationship focus. There was insufficient discussion around whether the spirits or forces being used for magic were good or not, and I think this needed to be made clearer.

And then the book just ended. It wasn't even a cliffhanger (although it left a fair few things unresolved), but it wasn't a clear ending either. I don't mind a series, but I like each book to contain a complete story arc, and to finish at a natural place. This didn't. Enjoyable while it lasted, but there was something missing.

Thanks to Kate Policani for providing a free ebook for review.

Gaele says

This was a clever and funny, page-turning read. Once you get past the lack of vowels in the various names for magic, spells and witches that the Convergence have deemed as “politically correct”, the story continues with the unique twist on the basic witchcraft / wiccan paranormal story.

Colleen is addicted to books, considers herself a Rubenesque redhead with hazel eyes, and is planning on relaxing during this last summer before starting at community college. All that changes when she finds a book that opens a whole new world to her, and her ‘hidden powers’ are revealed. Far from being a smooth transition, Colleen is poofed off to the SPRU to begin her adventure.

Written with a smooth hand and a sense of humor that instantly endears Colleen to the reader, we are treated to her sarcastic quick wit that never quite leaves her even in times of stress. Characters are introduced and developed in a way that both serves the plot and develops them with characteristics that are found in many people you would meet on the street. In addition, the author has included photos from sites around Seattle that decorate the pages as well as provide an “I didn’t know that” moment to readers who may not be familiar with the city.

This is a book that is perfectly suitable for a young adult reader as well as adults: while there are romances, they are mostly chaste and reside in the realm of adoration/flirtation rather than adult situations. Colleen also is far different from other newcomers to witchcraft that we are previously acquainted with, as she refuses to speak spells preferring not to mess with the natural order of the world. I thoroughly enjoyed this book, giggled often as I was reading, and will anxiously await the next steps in the story.

I received an eBook copy of this book from the author for purpose of honest review. I was not compensated for this review, and all conclusions are my own responsibility.

Mimi Smith says

4 stars

Really funny :)

“A super-hot guy glared at me. Somehow, I had pissed him off. In my craziness, I’d probably insulted his mother in Swahili without knowing. I gave him an apologetic shrug. Sorry, hot guy. I’m crazy and so, inherently offensive.”

Reviewed for InD'tale here

InD'tale Magazine says

Hilarious, highly enjoyable and riveting! Kate Policani has succeeded in creating a beautiful world of magic,

laughter and teenage woes!

Read full review in the 2012 Holiday issue of InD'tale Magazine.

Kay says

I won this book on Goodreads first reads. I do not know the author and was not compensated for this review. All conclusions are my own responsibility.

This is a great read. It's witty, funny and a page turner. The characters are well developed and necessary to the plot. The main character, Colleen, is 18 so the book can be enjoyed by a YA reader as well as an adult reader.

Colleen Underhill is a typical teenage girl that has plans to attend community college in the fall. She has a love of books so she hangs out at the library. One day she finds a book that belongs to no one and it changes her life. She is a Christian girl and thoroughly opposed to using the magical powers she finds out she possesses. When she is sent to a college for people with special abilities, she has to learn several years worth of knowledge in only a few months. Colleen finds that most difficult with the love triangle (or maybe a square) she gets herself into. The author also includes pictures for those of us who are not completely familiar with Seattle, where the story takes place.

It's a quick read that makes you hope there's a sequel. I thoroughly enjoyed and recommend it.

Ionia says

Every once in a while I get lucky enough to pick up a book that more or less puts the critic in me to the side and just allows me to enjoy reading. Kate Policani has done this in "Don't Judge a Book by Its Magic." This is an enjoyable story filled with magic, mystery and romance.

I'm not certain if this is intended to be YA or just general audience, but it could really work for anyone. I could imagine a teen audience enjoying this book, but I am over thirty and I loved it as well. It is one of those books that doesn't have anything in it you wouldn't want your child reading, but you don't mind getting the chance to enjoy either.

Kate Policani is a brave author. I say this because she has written a book about a magical teenager, who goes to a magical school. This was a risk on her part, considering the success and endless popularity of some certain other books that feature those two same elements. What I can say about this, is that Kate has rocked the place! Her characters and school are entirely different, her plot is one I had not seen handled this way before and her fantasy elements are fully original.

I have read some of the other reviews of this book and it is a bit odd, because the thing that others complained about (the difficulty of pronouncing the imagined words) was one of the things that I really liked the most about this novel. Having to focus on how to pronounce the words made me feel like I really was in a different place, beyond the ordinary.

The focus of the story changed courses a bit between the first half and the second, but I liked the way the author chose to take her characters. The romance was age appropriate for the main character and wasn't as highly predictable as many others. It was sweet and the type of romance that you want to see succeed. I found it easy to like the main character and was interested in what would happen to her.

If I was pressed to choose on thing about this book that I felt could have been improved, it would be the end. The story is amazing, the reader gets many rewards by reading this book, but the end felt a bit lackluster. It wasn't the ideal ending for such a fantastic book, in my opinion.

Overall this was a book that I would feel comfortable recommending to anyone, regardless of age or faith. The messages in this book are not the overtly in your face type and it was a lot of fun to read.

Ian says

After Colleen reads a magical book she discovers she has magical powers. But she's not a witch! Heavens no, don't even mention that word! And evolution, don't mention evolution either...come to think of it don't mention gay. Oh...what was I saying? Oh yeah, she's some sort of non-witch magical being.

She is enrolled into a magical college where she is collared....no not in a BDSM way, in a magical way to protect her. Luckily there are three hot guys who are willing to hold her leash if she ever wants to go for a walk...OK it was a bit BDSM.

Apart from going for the occasional walk with a hot guy, it's just your usual college dorm room orgies...albeit G Rated christian orgies...with no sex or nudity or any fun. In other words, a bible study. She goes on dates with one of the guys....he's a real bad boy, he took her to church. And that's about it.

This book is an excellent treatise on the benefits of polygamy. Kate Policani passionately advocates for a change to the status quo where a marriage consists of a man and a woman, moving to a more liberal definition where a man can have six wives if that's what sails his boat...and a woman can have three husbands if that's what puts the motion in her ocean.

Tahlia Newland says

In true Kate Policani style, Don't Judge a Book By Its Magic is highly original, quirky and light hearted. In some respects it's almost a parody of contemporary YA fantasy. Colleen, an ordinary teenager with excessive gushiness—especially when surrounded by lots of hot

guys—reads a book about a magical ‘river’ running through Seattle. Next thing she discovers that she can see it. Before she knows what’s happening, someone’s got wind of it and she’s whisked away from her parents to a special school for people like her—people who can do magic. Though they don’t call it magic. They call it lots of unpronounceable words. Colleen eventually manages to get her mouth around the lingo, but I never did.

Nevertheless, Colleen refuses to get her mouth around spells because, as a good Christian, she’s morally opposed to it, and she won’t cave in to pressure. So she sets about doing her studies without the aid of spelling. It’s not only that that makes her different at the school; it’s also that she has grown up in the non-magical world and she looks like a non-magical person, something highly desirable because it’s so rare. Although surrounded by kids who are extremely beautiful—she continually reminds us how hot the boys are—Colleen finds herself highly sought after in the marriage market, something that’s very much on these kids’ minds.

Colleen goes on a ‘magical clean up’ mission, but instead of destroying the ‘mistake’, she brings it home with her. Char is a rather adorable garbage munching creature that adds another layer of cute to a story that is already full of cuteness.

I really liked the concepts behind the magic. The whole system is quite believable. If you look at the world in a certain way, you can almost see the threads of magic that link everything together.

You’ve probably gathered by now that this is not your usual hard-headed urban fantasy. If you’d like something different to the deluge of darkness we’re offered by the mainstream, then this book is for you.

All in all, this is an easy, fun read that I really enjoyed. I believe there will be a sequel or two, which is great, because I’d really like to get to know the boys in Colleen’s life better. The author has certainly set the scene for an interesting series.

I give it 5 stars and a place on the Awesome Indies.

Rebecca Graf says

The magic between two lovers is something that can light up a night and outshine the sun. It's wonderful unless you don't know how powerful it can until you are on your way to college and you pick up a lone book in the library. Then your world changes.

Kate Policani brings to you in *Don't Judge a Book By Its Magic* an older version of the Harry Potter story. Colleen thinks she has things laid out what will happen next until she picks up a book at the library. She begins to read it and things around her begin to change. She discovers a special group of people that contain magic and she is one of them that they did not know about. Sent to a special college for only those with these special abilities, she has to learn fifteen years worth of knowledge in just a few months. That becomes impossible when she falls for one guy, is claimed by another, but the magic shows she is destined to be with someone else. What is a girl to do?

Kate Policani has spun an interesting tale that doesn't quite leave you hanging but wanting more in the next book which is not out yet. I have to admit that at first I had trouble connecting with the main character, but that could easily have been because the last two books I had read over the few days before were so different. Colleen is very unique and took me a few chapters to accept. Once I did and the other characters appeared and began to grow, I settled back for an enjoyable read. The interactions between Colleen and her potential love interests were comical, sweet, and sizzling.

The scenes in this book is not adult in the sense of explicit scenes. It is just not geared toward the middle

grades and young adults as Harry Potter was. This one has the potential of getting much hotter in that area, but right now this book is very calm when it comes to language and intimacy.

I love the humor Colleen has and how she approached everything in life with it. The relationships established in this book proved to be wonderful and full of potential in the next books.

This was a fun read. It is not too long and the writing is entertaining so you won't get bored. Check it out.

Sabrina Ricci says

I'm a fan of magic, as well as the author Kate Policani. She's a self-published author with some very creative marketing ideas, and I was lucky enough to have the opportunity to read her fiction.

Her newest book is *Don't Judge a Book By Its Magic*, and it tells the story of 18-year-old Colleen, who suddenly discovers she's part of a race of people with supernatural powers. It's not magic exactly, more like the ability to channel life forces. But there are spells and tricks, all hidden in a secret world in plain sight.

Colleen is a relatable, likeable narrator, who I felt could be naïve at times. I think this book safely falls into the new "new fiction" genre, since it is about college students. However, this genre walks a fine line, and at times the book felt a little too high school. For example, Colleen is boy crazy and has many sexually charged encounters with young men at her school, yet nothing ever happens. It took me a while to realize all the characters are waiting until marriage before doing anything sexual, but in my mind college is a time for experimenting, so it would have helped to show this as part of the culture.

I also found it interesting how faith plays a role in this fiction book. In *Don't Judge*, Colleen grapples with whether or not casting spells is moral. She feels it goes against her religion, and because of that she often goes head to head with students who feel casting spells is a huge part of their lives.

This book manages to cover a lot of topics, all while developing a larger story about a potentially epic romance. Kate Policani is a great writer, and her latest book is a fun, quick read. As someone who loves reading about magic, I found it hard to put down. Looking forward to the next book in the series.

Yuthika says

I felt this was a parody. I mean, it has to be, right? Colleen can do magic, but don't call it that! She is a witch / magician, but don't call her that! Instead, let's employ politically correct words, and let her go to a magic school where she is literally on a leash and goes on walks...! Was it supposed to be witty? In my eyes, it didn't work. Sorry, but I'll stick to Harry Potter, where I can at least freely use the word "magic".

Meredith says

This was an enjoyable book for the most part - it made me laugh and smile a fair amount. It's very light - not for someone looking for deep subject matter.

This story at first reminded me of K.M. Shea's "My Life at the Magical Beings' Rehabilitation Center" because of the age of the main character, the light/witty inner commentary, and having to learn the rules of a magical society. But that similarity only lasted so long - my one complaint about the book is that it quickly becomes focused almost solely on which guy the heroine will choose....there's not much else driving the plot. Which is disappointing because I think there's a lot that could have been made of this set up. That said, I did enjoy it. I'm not sure if I'll read the next one or not.

Note - I received this book free from Awesome Indies Books in return for an honest review.

Sharon says

The book up for review is “DON’T JUDGE A BOOK BY ITS MAGIC ” By Kate Policani

Having read Kate’s previous book I was excited to get a chance to read her latest one. They say every book needs a hook to draw in your readers and make them read the novel through. Kate did not accomplish that on the first page. She accomplished it on the first, second, third , fourth and before you knew it the chapter had ended. It has been ages since a book has done this for me. As a beta reader and also a reviewer for BookSneeze this does not come across my desk often.

This book is adult fiction but is appropriate for YA because there is no objectionable content. The main character is 18. Colleen who is your typical teenager lives in Seattle. Only she is not which is unknown to her. She has magic powers but not your ordinary run of the mill magic tricks that you see witches and wizards do, that is so not in the same realm.

Finding a book in a near by library transforms her life as she knows it. But not only that the people who are like her have taken notice. You see Colleen is one of a kind. One with powers who has lived in the real world as a Skupdyn which is a nonmagical person.

Her adventures begin to unfold as she is enrolled in a college with like minded students.

I am so glad Kate has placed in the beginning a Glossary of Terms in the front of the book. It was a huge help for me to refer to so I could make sure I was getting things right.

A great read, it does not take long to finish and another fine piece of writing by Kate.

Kate Policani says

I wrote this book as a study in confronting issues and events that challenge faith and make one re-evaluate beliefs. In addition, this first book in the series begins an anti-romance arc in which I expose the misconceptions of popular romantic fiction and show the reality.

Laura Catherine says

The first thing I'll say is that this book has a lot of great concepts and hard to pronounce words, but it really sets the whole magical world up. I didn't like Colleen when I first met her. I thought she was a bit ditsy and clueless, but as I got further and further into the story I realised just how strong she was how much she stood by her beliefs. Of course it has the hints of romance and magic, but the core of this story is Colleen's beliefs and how they are conflicted by the discovery of magic.

Following Colleen's journey I really felt her grow and felt her new understandings as well. It was so interesting learning about the hidden magical world like I was sitting the classes with Colleen, sharing her experiences. I enjoyed the different characters, each with their own personality to distinguish them and the way Colleen reacts and interacts with them.

Don't Judge A Book By It's Magic is a wonderful fantasy read that puts a new spin on things like only Kate Policani can.
