



Girl's Guide to Witchcraft

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Which is more unlikely? Meeting a single, straight, reasonably attractive, willing-to-commit man? Or discovering a secret cache of magic books?

For good girl Jane Madison, neither has a shot in hell of coming true—until the day she finds a hidden room....

Now she's done a bit of experimenting and found a spell that makes her irresistible to men—even those who have previously ignored her. And another that turns a cat into her witch's familiar (a snarky, critical, self-absorbed man—pretty much a typical male). Though her impulsive acts of magic have brought a warder (sexy, grouchy, elusive and determined to stop her from using magic) down on her, Jane's not willing to let go of this fantastic new life.

Though she wonders about having things that aren't "real," she's having too much fun to stop. After all, no one ever said being a witch was easy....

Girl's Guide to Witchcraft Details

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Mita says

I love reading 'chicklit', but the problem with the genre is that the more you read them, the harder it is to find the good ones as opposed to those who were just capitalising on the genre's popularity the last couple of years.

I first became interested to read Girl's Guide to Witchcraft because Amazon recommended it to me in conjunction with my interest in Harry Potter and chicklit. It was years ago, and even though I've been meaning to read it, it's always just sitting on my wishlist for years. Until now.

As interesting as the premise is, the book doesn't deliver for me. The lack of direction in the plot makes it feel rather winding. It feels like 3/4 of it is just an attempt to balance introduction to the wonders of witchcraft, the bittersweet sometimes-fun-sometimes-lonely life of a single girl, and the drone of daily activities inserted with a little bit of humour. Things only started happening as it neared the end, and it wasn't much of a plot climax or denouement. Overall, it all reads like a long narrative that builds up towards nowhere, and that was the point that disappointed me.

Even if I should look at it as a 'fun mindless read' chicklit book, the characters aren't strong enough for the readers to be attached to, and in my case, makes it put-down-able.

My review may sound harsh, but I think just because it's chicklit doesn't mean that it can get away with just frivolously narrating the joys and pain of the witty single girl. I still expect a good plot with endearing characters that I care about. Maybe not in an award-winning scale, but a scale where it doesn't make me wish I could get my time back.

Kim says

Mindy Klasky is not a very good writer. Half of the sentences she uses seem as though she threw them in there as an afterthought. Her sentence structure ranges from rambling to staccato as we're "treated" to a wide range of Jane's bizarre mood swings.

The main things that bothered me?

1. The characterization of Neko. The complete stereotype of a gay man. Oh, look! He knows more about eyeliner and clothing than dumpy Jane! And the constant "hissing" and whatever else? Okay, we get that he used to be a cat. No need to beat us over the head with it every two seconds.
2. Jane's treatment of Melissa. Melissa is her best friend, but it seems all Jane does is treat her like shit. She mocks her about her dates and love life, settles disagreements with a game of "Rock, Paper, Scissors", and constantly calls Melissa up in a frenzy about her boy "troubles". Jane constantly needs Melissa's help for mojito therapy and cooking/baking, yet she gives her nothing in return.
3. Jane's treatment of her mother. She is such a sullen little brat when she meets her mother. The part where her grandmother tells her to snap out of it because having never had children, of course she doesn't

understand how much her mother loves her was the best part of the book. Of course, Jane doesn't take kindly to differing opinions. She's convinced her mother hates her, and is a kook. But oh wait! It turns out they both have magical powers! Guess she's not so wacky and awful after all!

4. Jane's clear mental illness. She's been "observing" (stalking) a library patron for nine months, calling him her Imaginary Boyfriend. Then, after a convenient magical spell makes him pop a boner for her historical costume she's forced to wear at work, he asks her on a date. From this point on, she calls him her Boyfriend. Yes, it's capitalized every time. Never mind that he has only kissed her twice-once before her kitchen erupted in flames, and another one by the shitter after their lunch. Romantic.

Just because you went on a date with one guy one time does not make him your boyfriend. If that were the case, Melissa would have hundreds of boyfriends by now. But, silly Melissa! She just attracts awful, laughable guys. Jane attracts gorgeous men who fawn all over her! Who cares if it's because she's a witch and cast a spell on them? He ordered GARLIC BREAD at lunch. Clearly, this means he's comfortable enough around her to date her! Never mind that he never actually -asked- her to be his girlfriend yet...

5. Jane's irritating habit of reverting back to acting like a spoiled five-year-old. Jane pisses off David by being her usual dickish self, and David calmly says that he's done teaching her magic if that's what she wants. Jane says, and I quote, "So, do you want me to apologize? Is that it? I'm sorry, and I want you to be my teacher again?" How does this girl get through life if this is really the way she thinks friendships work? She is so oblivious to the feelings of everyone around her, unless those feelings involve being hopelessly in love with her.

6. Jane's a major creeper. (See mention of her stalking above). After one lunch date, she runs into Jason at a gala, and in the middle of a slow dance, whispers in his ear that she wants him to meet her entire family at a family reunion in two weeks. He agrees, but it's still weird. She flits from David to Jason and back again, and thinks nothing of it. Meanwhile, she's a condescending dick to her "best friend" who goes on multiple first dates a week looking for the right guy. At least Melissa's trying to find the -right- guy, not just a guy who will stick his tongue down her throat after a garlicky lunch and buy her marshmallows...

I'm actually not quite finished reading the book yet. Jane and Jason have yet to go to THE FARM for the family reunion. What will happen? Will Jason discover she's a witch and "leave" her? Will he reveal that he has powers too and marry her? Will they have a threesome with the Russian girl he claims he's not sleeping with? Will David really leave Jane to fend for herself, or will he be reeled back in with her winning personality?

This book is such a trainwreck that it's almost delightful. So, I gave it two stars.

UPDATE: I finally finished the book. Can I just say how happy I am that Jason was married to the Russian? I really wasn't expecting that. I thought Jane was going to end up with David happily ever after, but that didn't happen either. I'm also glad she realized that Melissa isn't actually a pathetic woman to be pitied after all. Still though, nothing exceptional enough to give it three stars.

I especially wish things had been much more conclusive with Jane and how she got her powers. It's assumed her grandmother has some, and her mother has some (which seems to be the only reason Jane deems her bearable), but her grandmother freaks out about the very mention of magic. I realize there are more books in the series after this. Maybe things will be resolved then, if I can bring myself to read another one of Klasky's books.

April Dowling says

This may be the shallowest main character for a book I've ever read; the quintessential brat. She has a freak out over the smallest issues, and the freak outs are on a grand scale. She's self centered and while it's obvious she loves her grandmother she makes no effort to disguise her impatience with her grandmothers requests. The main character grows, a bit, during the course of the book but it appears as though any growth is purely self serving.

The story itself is written like a movie. There are cutaways that skip over days and you get a small recap of 'here's what happened'.

I was not the least bit impressed with the characters, the story telling, or the plot development. This is one series that stops at book one for me.

?? Carmen the Bootyshaker Temptress ?? says

Rated 3.5 stars.

Anna Karras says

I found this book because it was mentioned in Library Journal. The author is a librarian, and so it the protagonist. So naturally, being a librarian myself, I had to read it. And I was pleasantly entertained by this book. (And I was excited to learn that the sequel was available at my library.)

This book introduces Jane Madison, a young reference librarian working at a special Colonial history library in Washington, D.C. At the beginning of the novel we find her mooning over a college professor who comes in to work every Monday morning (she calls him her Imaginary Boyfriend). She is horrified, then, when the powers that be decide to make the staff wear period costumes while at work. So now she has to try to look sexy in a mobcap. Heh.

The worst thing that happens is that she finds out the board is cutting her salary by 25%! But the good news (?) is she gets to live, rent-free, in the cottage out back. It takes a little elbow grease, but she and her best friend, Melissa, get the place clean and livable.

On her first night in the house she can't sleep, and ends up finding a hidden key that lets her into a locked room in the basement. Inside she finds a bunch of dusty old books. She opens one, and reads aloud, and...something strange happens.

This novel was better than most of what I would call the "chick lit" genre. The plot was carefully constructed, and the characters were well developed. Especially fun are Jane's grandmother, and Neko, Jane's flamboyantly gay familiar.

It was a hoot. Check it out.

Ronda says

I kept getting annoyed with Jane as she idolized her Imaginary Boyfriend (aka the IB). But then I remembered her age, and my own frustrating tendency to idolize, pedestalize, or otherwise create my own version of someone- without necessarily looking beyond those rose-colored glasses and giving myself a chance to see the person, not as a reflection of my dreams, but as a real, flesh and blood person complete with all the grit and gristle that makes us human in the first place. Not fair to the person or to myself. So perhaps my annoyance with Jane is a bit more self-directed than a matter of her being an annoying, immature twit with no common sense when it comes to relationships. Reading this story was a lot like watching an episode of *I Love Lucy*, cringing because you know she's making a mistake, but needing to watch just to see how she gets out of whatever new pickle she's gotten into this time.

That said, I laughed through a lot of this story, cringing aside, and had to jump right into the next, just to see what happened next.

Suzanne Costner says

The motivations for this character's eventual transformation from work-a-day reference librarian to new witch are shallow and murky at best. Also, she is titling the sequel "Sorcery and the Single Girl" when "Hex and the Single Girl" is much, much funnier. Sigh.

Kate says

I should preface this by saying that I don't read much chick lit. Generally not my cuppa. I was intrigued by this because while it is chick lit, it is also fantasy, but not of the standard werewolf type that seems rather prevalent these days. I enjoyed the first bit, but there were several plot points I didn't like, some of the characters never rose above stereotypes, and finally, I thought Jane was quite irresponsible.

The plot points I thought were a bit forced included Jane being expected to come to terms with the fact that her mother, Clara, (view spoiler)

Then there are the characters that feel like little more than stereotypes. Most of them aren't too bad, but Neko as the Gay Best Friend got on my nerves. He gives advice on makeup, hair (his boyfriend cuts her hair and does her nails), helps her pick out the perfect formal dress, and gives relationship advice. To make things worse, he's also (view spoiler)

But the real reason I could only give this book two stars, and ultimately didn't like it, was Jane. While I liked Jane generally, she is extremely irresponsible with spells. After promising not to (view spoiler)

I won't be continuing the series.

Ginger says

There were so many things I loved about this book - Jane is a librarian (holla!) And the author, Mindy Klasky is a librarian as well - you go girl! This book has had some excellent attention to detail and we reap the benefits on every page.

There are great plot twists, light-hearted magical fun to spice it up, good pace and solid relationships between Jane and her Gran, her best friend Melissa and to the new flip side of her life with her familiar Neko and warder David. And I'm giving special mention to comedic timing. You've simply no choice but to love a character with a healthy dose of wit - especially when combined with her ability to fall into embarrassing situations. It's a wonderful gift when a book can be this entertaining on so many levels.

For me personally, I truly enjoyed reading about another librarian's daily life in a different library setting (they are a reference library with poor traffic so to boost their numbers they put in a coffee bar...Mm! Mm!).

The romance was kept suspenseful for the most part but very light in content. In fact, it is left somewhat unfinished for us and Jane at the end, but there are high hopes for book two in the series.

This book was just pure and simple FUN and I can't wait to get my hands on the next book in this series. Too bad I don't have my own magic wand to make it happen this instant...I wonder if, like Jane, my pampered chef wooden spoon would suffice?

Mary says

I found this for free on Amazon. It was a goodie! Well written, funny, lighthearted and even silly at times. There was one thing that confused me...it felt like it should have taken place in England. The author's choice of words ie: Grandma was "Gran", preference for tea, just made me think we were not on this side of the pond. Which would have been fine, except I was supposed to believe (and I kept on forgetting) that the story was taking place in DC. In my head Jane was definitely speaking with a British accent...And no, the ending didn't shock me out of my shoes, it was fairly predictable. But I enjoyed it.

Leah says

Some parts were definitely better than others. While certain scenes were a little long, the overall pace of this book was good. Although I'm not feeling the rush I sometimes do when I finish some series books where I immediately want to know what's next in store. Perhaps I'll pick up the next book while browsing the library.

Jacob Proffitt says

I just couldn't get into this book—mainly due to the heroine, but there are structural issues as well.

The main character, Jane, has one reaction to anything that happens in her life: freak out. Magic is real: freak

out. I did a spell: freak out. I did a second spell: freak out. The second spell worked: call friend and freak out. Seriously, dial it down, woman, or we're never going to know if something happens that's actually worth a freak out. There *can* be charm in the heroine who goes from crisis to crisis and never has time to catch up. But a crisis isn't manufactured simply by freaking out, though I've known people who think they are. I don't like being around people like that and that includes as a reader.

It doesn't help that Jane is kind of a jerk even when she isn't freaking out. Jane is pretty catty, internally, about her friend, Melissa (particularly about her organized man-hunt). The friendship also seems pretty one-sided with Melissa just expected to be there to lend emotional support for any and all of Jane's many freak-outs—even the trivial ones. As high-maintenance as Jane is, Melissa deserves a medal... or co-dependence therapy. And don't get me started on Jane's relationship to her Grandma. Yeah, Grandma hid some stuff about her childhood but it's not like Grandma is evil. Jane exiling her to Outer Mongolia for it was pretty cold (uh, figuratively speaking).

Another problem is that while I made it a little more than a quarter through the book, I was *still* waiting for it to start. Jane is part of a coven? Don't they have to meet, first? Isn't there some kind of induction ceremony? No? And who are they, anyway? Practicing random magic is "bad"? Says who? Are they scary? And why would they say it's bad? Why do we not know these important details?

Ugh. Eventually I just decided that a book that hasn't started yet after a quarter of the way in probably isn't going anywhere worthwhile in the first place—particularly if I have to go through a billion freak-outs on the way...

Wulfwyn says

I enjoyed this book so much! I liked the majority of the characters a lot. Jane is a favorite and I am so invested in what happens to her. I want to begin reading the next book now. I like that no one is perfect in the story. I love all the emotions that Jane went through. Nothing was glossed over. It is one of the most honest, true to life paranormal story I have read in awhile. I love being taken away by fantasy and had forgotten how good it can feel to meet a character you can relate so well to. At times this book had the feel of Practical Magic for me. (That is good as that book is a favorite with my girls and me.) I'm not big on books I love being made for the screen. It is so iffy on how they will turn out that it scares me. However this is a series that I think would be truly fun to see made for the screen. I laughed way too often reading this book. It has definitely made my list of favorite reads for this year.

There are mature scenes though nothing explicit in this book for those who want that information.

Chelsea says

up awhile ago and have been busy but I decided to try the book out tonight and I was pleasantly surprised and I LOVED this book. I'm really looking forward to snatching up all the other books in this series because the plot and characters I can really relate to.

We've got Jane who's a Librarian, who basically takes a 25% pay cut. Well, she's a bit upset about that because she won't even be able to make her rent and considering librarians don't make that much in the first

place its a very sticky situation. Her boss offers her the place out back near the gardens and she's like "the tool shed??!" Well anyways, its not as tiny as a tool shed and with the help of her best friend Melissa she gets it all cleaned up.

She's always gotten weird chilly vibes when she's walked by the place and her first night sleeping there, she's just imagining what might be possessing the house. She goes to the bathroom and discovers this key in the wall and starts to look around for what door the key might be for.

She discovers the basement and she's imagining rats and god knows what else down there ready to jump out at her but when she gets to the bottom she actually finds a ton of ancient and magical books. She sits down and she reads one of the spells out loud and all of a sudden the statue "cat" is a gay man freaking out over her choice of clothing (I think it might have been the slippers?) lol ;)

Anyways, a Warden shows up, someone who's meant to protect witches etc, and this David guy is super pissed at her for invoking the spell and she promises him she won't say anymore.. so the next time her friend Melissa wants to see, she decides she'll just read it in her head so it won't happen... well, you can just imagine how THAT worked out :)

Anyways, this is a very enchanting read, and I truly love finding indie authors with affordable books, it makes me stalk all their books because its worth it and its affordable. Love that! ;) If you haven't tried Mindy but you like a little bit of magic, witches, and familiars I think you'll really enjoy this book! ;)

Veronique says

Gratis gedownload via kobo. Wel een leuk verhaal, maar niet heel sterk
