

Across the East River Bridge

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When historian Christopher Finnegan walks into a new museum in Brooklyn, he's chagrined to learn its curator is his old academic rival, Troy Rafferty. Worse, Troy is convinced the museum is haunted and wants Finn's help learning more about the ghosts. Finn and Troy have never gotten along and Finn wants to run screaming, but then Troy offers him an intriguing proposal: Troy will help Finn with a research project for his overbearing boss if Finn will help Troy solve a mystery involving two men who died in the building under mysterious circumstances in 1878.

Finn and Troy piece together the two men's lives—and the quiet romance that grew between them—through diaries, newspaper clippings, and police reports. They're both soon convinced the men were murdered. They're also convinced the ghosts are real—even Finn witnesses paranormal phenomena he can't deny—and that they're capable of affecting thoughts, feelings, and actions. When Finn and Troy start falling for each other despite years of animosity, Finn worries he's being manipulated by the ghosts to stay with Troy and solve the case. Troy is convinced the love between them is real, but he'll need to figure out how to get rid of the ghosts in order to prove it.

Across the East River Bridge Details

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From Reader Review Across the East River Bridge for online ebook

Isa K. says

I should start by saying that, in general, there are a lot of things I liked about this book:

- I liked Finn, mostly because my brain kept INSISTING he looked like this and that amused me :)
- I liked the idea of academic rivalry, because (as I think is probably clear from my reviews) I am an insufferable pedant at heart
- Hate sex? Did I mention that? Hate sex is always +A to me :D

But for a number of reasons this book just didn't work for me :/ It was so well researched, but you would never know that! Usually with these types of stories I am obsessively googling everything trying to understand which parts of the story are truly fictional and which not. I was half way through this book before it even occurred to me that Victoria Woodhull might not be a contrived construction thrown together to facilitate the romance (Surprise! She isn't! And she's more awesome than the book let on!) ... it's a really weird thing when real people seem fake in a story.

Fair Warning: This book is *info dump mania*. Stuff isn't so much revealed as it is thrown in your lap for you to digest on your own time. Take, for example, Finn and Troy's relationship. This affair has BACKSTORY-- its backstory has backstory! The burden of past drama is something that Finn and Troy have to overcome in their love story. But rather than having their history slowly revealed to us we're basically just told point blank within the first couple of chapters everything that has happened between these two up to this point. I have very limited patience for the 'will-they-won't-they' stuff in a romance novel-- mostly because HELLO IT'S A ROMANCE NOVEL, OBVIOUSLY **THEY WILL**-- so the more pages of 'no! no! I could never love you~~~' drama I'm forced to read, the more I feel like my time is being wasted. Slowly revealing the details of Finn and Troy's history over the course of the book would have given the reader something to do while Finn and Troy danced around one another. I would have preferred to be made to wonder about the tension and hostility, having the story slowly pieced together as I read, than knowing everything right away and having to wait for Finn and Troy to get with the program already.

The other problem was the structure of the mystery which was ... not terribly mysterious ^_^^;; Whodunits as a genre is a bit of a misnomer because, really, readers couldn't give the tiniest little shit who did it. It's fiction, so whether the murderer is the butler or Miss Scarlet doesn't make any difference. In this case you have double the 'who cares?' quotient: the murder happened in the 1870s. So not only is the identity of the killer irrelevant to the reader, it's also basically irrelevant to the characters as well.

What makes the classic whodunits work is an intricate twisting of story within story. Two for the price of one, if you will. You have the story of the detective working to solve the case and you also have the backstory of why the murder happened. The WHY is what's interesting, the HOW a close second. The WHO/WHERE/WHEN/etc is not compelling to readers at all. Many a promising mystery falls flat because the author is focusing the reveals around who had the opportunity and throwing together a hasty explanation of motives in the climax. To write a good mystery IMO, you need to do the opposite: leave the logistics for the end and focus on the motives.

Here Finn and Troy's research into the murder is broke up by flashbacks into the victims lives, but these flashbacks focus on the ghosts' love story, not the crime that's forthcoming. Rather than giving the reader a set of possible suspects to mull over while the story continues, suspects are introduced out of nowhere, researched and dismissed. After a while this starts to get a little ridiculous. Obviously the suspect introduced 3/4s of the way through has the greatest likelihood of actually being the killer, only 25% of the book is left!

In the end I did like Finn and Troy as a couple, but I found myself thinking *okay we've had the hot sex, the confused feelings, the more hot sex, the revelation, some making out ... why aren't these two together yet? *skim* Nope ... still not together *skimskim* nope STILL not together. Wake me up when they get together, okay? >.>*

Ami says

This story is really beautiful. One, I love the whole academic research in searching for the truth behind the murder-suicide and ghosts. Both guys, Finn and Troy are likeable and I always openly welcome any characters that are academically advanced. Love how they each take the journal of one of the gentlemen, to structure the lives of Brill and Cutler. Of course, if it's me, I probably just check the latest entry of the journal rather than reading it from the beginning. I'm impatient, sue me *lol*.

I think it's a well-researched story, and in a sense, sort of reminding me of another story (by M. Jules Aedin, "Windows in Time) in which the two people in the present are trying to solve a mystery that happens in the past. I love the emotional factor that is presented here as well. Finn is so determined to NOT liking Troy, trying to blame Troy for what he cannot achieve ... but of course, like magnet, the two of them just can't fight the feeling they have for each other. Although Troy reaches to that point earlier than Finn.

ONE IMPORTANT THING:, I don't know if guys really talk about their emotion like what Troy did to Finn. I personally think this is a projection of what we (women) like or wish, rather than in actuality. I'm not complaining, some of the words here just squeeze my heart completely --- I'm just not sure whether it can truly happen :p

The ending is sweet though :)

Ann says

Well, I was late to work this morning because I had to finish the last chapter and the epilogue. I sometimes shy away from paranormal romances because I absolutely love a good ghost story and it's so hard to find a well written one. This book did not disappoint.

I loved that the main characters were so different and had such different voices. Their banter was amusing even when they argued. And they argued a lot. I wanted to give Finn a hug and smack him upside the head all in one page. He was so stubborn and just refused to give up his anger at Troy for the longest time. I totally get it, I hate to quit a good mad before I'm ready! At the same time I did appreciate how they were mature enough to admit (even if just to themselves at first) their misplaced anger and insecurities.

The paranormal element wasn't overdone or oversold. Being a West Coaster I couldn't appreciate the

historical elements and locations as much as a native could, but they didn't leave me out of the story either. Sometimes, when a book is set in a very specific place that has a rich history I'm not familiar with I can feel like a bit of an outsider and I don't connect with the story or the characters, but I didn't feel that here.

The connection between Finn and Troy was obvious, realistic and sometimes heartbreaking. Overall I really enjoyed this book and will be reading more from this author.

Jo says

... ghosts, an old mystery and a sweet romance. The perfect weekend read. ♥

Daniela Green says

This book was only 162 pages long? wow!

It felt like a 500 pages book. It was boring as hell.

The plot was promising, but the execution... oh my.

The writing was insufferably plain.

Even the more dramatic events were described like the author was writing a grocery list.

Not a spark, neither an emotion... nothing.

And I would like to know what Troy wrote in his book, to say the cold case was solved.

Something like: "I know who the murderer was, because I saw him while I was possessed by a ghost?"

Whatever.

Arthur says

4.5 stars

This is a nice reading. The plot is not terribly original: the standard story of contemporary researchers trying to solve mysterious deaths in the past and in the process their relationship evolves into something else. At first, the MCs were kinda enemies, but with nudges from the ghosts whose deaths they are investigating, they fall in love with each other. Or is it simply because the ghosts mess around with their minds?

The way the author discusses the late 19th century New York life is amazing. Also nice is the discussion on about how far gay acceptances today have been different from the past. Plus, I just love reading about gay academic!

The reason I didn't give full 5 stars is that the villain is too black and white, something that the author seems to keep repeating in most--if not all--of her works. (view spoiler) Still, I enjoyed reading it.

Mandy*reads obsessively* says

3.5-4

I enjoyed this romance and the mystery!

Solving the mystery of the suicide(or was it murder?) of 2 men in the 1870s bring Troy and Finn together after over 10 years of academic rivalry and sexual attraction!

The resolution of what happened to Teddy and Wash was so sad and touching!

I liked Finn better at the beginning, but quickly warmed to Troy and wanted to smack Finn a few times to get his head

out of his ..., well, anyway, I enjoyed this story! :)

Vio says

4.5 stars

A very good and imaginative story, the mystery, angst, sweet love and ghosts come together in a beautiful way. Troy and Finn have unresolved issues which simmer beneath the surface, Finn tries to stay angry at Troy but fails miserably. They have an alluring charm about them and are hot for each other, they couldn't keep their hands to themselves. I loved them, adorable and the dialogue between them while investigating the deaths of Teddy and Wash was fun and quirky. Teddy and Wash the ghosts haunting Brill House were a sweet I felt deeply for them, their love affair and death was tragic and terrible. I wish it could have been different for them *sniffs* it was sad. I enjoyed this story immensely and the writing and historical facts kept this interesting. Lovely ending, recommended!

Cole Riann says

Review posted at The Armchair Reader as part of Kate McMurray Week!

4.5 stars

This is such a great book to kick off Kate McMurray Week! To be honest, I wasn't quite sure what to expect of this story. I mostly read it on faith because I like the author. All I really knew was that it was about NYC and ghosts. So, I was pleasantly surprised when I did read it to find that it was something that I could really sink into. Part of my enjoyment of the story really comes from a love of history. Not that I'm particularly knowledgeable, especially about NYC history, but there's so much detail in this story that must have taken quite a bit of research and I found it all refreshing and compelling.

Finn and Troy have a turbulent history. Both pursuing advanced history degrees at NYU at the same time, they quickly found themselves to be rivals, with a love/hate relationship -- mostly hate. But, every few years they succumb to temptation and fall into bed with one another, promptly returning to hate each other the next day. Finn isn't where he expected to be when he envisioned his life all those years ago at NYU. He blames Troy for his failure to get his PhD that fuels his continued hatred. Troy was always the golden boy, one step ahead of him and outshining all of his successes. Now, years of regrets have become an ugly and miserable piece of Finn that he carries around with himself. And Troy is easy to hate... except when they're in bed together.

Now working as a research assistant for a famous biographer (who is a bit of a boss-hole), Finn is sent to

research a small museum in Brooklyn, only to find that the curator is none other than Troy. He looks good and is, as usual, a consummate flirt. And again like all the other times their NYC circles merge, Finn is at the same time frustrated and spiteful and yet reluctant to admit how well they work together and understand one another. They have incredibly similar interests in the history of the city and between them, share a wealth of knowledge. Finn isn't really passionate about the research for his boss, but Troy convinces Finn to help him research a mystery of his own. He's currently going through the journals of the man who once lived in the building and the mysterious circumstances around his death. Troy, though thorough as any historian, is more apt to believe in the strange occurrences in the building -- the cold spots, the dreams and as he delves deeper into the man's story, the physical manifestations he sees with his own eyes. As the two start to uncover the secrets of the dead and piece together a picture of life in Brooklyn in the 1870's, they start to fall in love. The problem, for Finn, is his reluctance to believe in what could ultimately be the manipulation of a couple of ghosts whose main interests aren't finally getting the two of them together, but to solve their murder.

I mentioned at the start of the review that the reason I really liked this book was the research and the history presented of Brooklyn, New York in a different era. I think, though, that this might be a sticking point for some readers. Make no mistake, this book takes history and makes it real and solid, but it's told from the view of two men who sift through obscure details every day and take them as deep as they go. So, much of this novel is really the journey into history, piece by piece as the two put it together. And there is a wealth of detail that Kate McMurray offers. I could see where some readers, who might not find those details as interesting as I, might find this book a tedious read.

What I really enjoyed was the journey to finding those answers, because the story and the picture of Brooklyn at that time takes shape slowly, and some of the best scenes in the novel were Finn and Troy connecting on the level of historians. It's their common language, when they have a hard time getting close in other areas (except sex, that one is easy for them!). Those scenes are the best because both will go from sniping at one another and confusion about their feelings to connecting through the project and offering details back and forth, sussing out answers between them. Their relationship really takes the enemies to lovers trope to a realistic level. Most of the raw and angry feelings come from Finn. But he's the character that we really get to know first and the one who we see this world through. When he actually lets down his guard enough to try to let some of that stagnate anger go, I think he finds that Troy really isn't the man that he thought he was and that he doesn't think of Finn in the way Finn thought he did. The dynamic between the two of them was done really well, and another reason that this story really worked for me, because the story starts with a shared history and routine between the two men and in their interactions. The research project is the catalyst to change that behavior. And discovering what life is like for a gay man in 1870's America not only gives Finn perspective but gives him more ways to connect and understand Troy.

Though I'm partial to this author's *Out in the Field* (which I'm going to be re-reading and reviewing later this week), this just might be my second favorite of hers. It's definitely a book I recommend to you, if you think you'll like it, of course ;)

Edina Rose says

Very good, well written romance about two

En who have been hating (and sexing) each other for more than 10 yrs. When they start working on an old unresolved mystery, they identify to the victims, two gay men in love, and end up falling in love with each other.

The parallel between the two heroes and the two victims is well done. The mystery is engaging, the

romance-mystery mix is excellent, the characters are well developed and the sex is hot.
This goes in my re-read list.

Feliz says

This was very, very interesting and definitely worth reading. It would've been a 5 star read if not for a few niggles:

- the historical references were drawn-out, dragging. Not always but often enough that it threw me out of the reading flow.
- the epilogue was the same. Too dragging, and redundant
- the ghosts? The mystery would've been interesting enough. Why having the ghosts serve them the solution on a silver platter? On the other hand: the solution scene in and of itself was fantastic, gripping and haunting.
- This graveyard business. Again, a jack-in-the box solution.

Otherwise: Finn and Troy were fantastic characters I really, really liked. Sweet, nerdy, bookish, hot, and so wonderfully unashamedly flaming, particularly Troy. I totally bought them together and thought that Finn deserved a good smack upon the head at times for his stubbornness.

Monika says

3.5 Stars

This was one of those stories that landed somewhere between I really liked it and I loved it. It's a great ghost/mystery/suspense story but it didn't draw me in the way I like my stories to do.

I was expecting to have a story that wouldn't let me put my kindle down and I didn't get that but I did enjoy this book.

Ayanna says

Imma be honest, I *really* wanted Finn to bottom, and he didn't, and so I was rather unhappy.

Very similar in premise to Lilacs, by Megan Derr, which I'd read kind of recently.

I dunno...it wasn't bad. I did rather like it, even if parts of it kind of weirded me out, like the first ghost-dream thing, when it was going on about one of the people's BO or something.

Chris says

4.5 stars. Very good paranormal m/m romance about two academic rivals with an unfortunate chemistry who work together to solve the cold case mystery of two men murdered together in late 19th century Brooklyn.

Simsala says

3,5-4 stars
