



A World Apart

L.J.K. Oliva

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"There are things that go bump in the night, Mr. MacMillian. It's my job to bump back."

Private detective Jesper MacMillian is sure he's seen it all. Following a long recovery after a horrific accident, his life is finally the way he wants it- or at least, close enough. The only monsters on his radar are the ones that keep him awake at night. When a grief-stricken couple begs him to find their lost son, it seems like just another day at the office.

Lena Alan is your friendly neighborhood medium. She sees ghosts, she talks to ghosts, and when necessary, she keeps them from interfering in the world of the living. A city like San Francisco has more than enough ghosts to keep her busy, but a shocking visitation puts her on a collision course with MacMillian and his newest case.

Before MacMillian can brace for impact, Lena drags him into a world where monsters aren't just real, they're hiding in plain sight. A deadly threat is lurking in San Francisco's dangerous underbelly, and it's going to take both of them to put it down.

For Lena, it's another day at the office.

For MacMillian, it's the beginning of the end of everything he thinks he knows.

A World Apart Details

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From Reader Review A World Apart for online ebook

Danielle says

A few unanswered questions

There were a few things left unanswered at the end. Wraps up the current case but will have to read the series for answers. Overall, I liked the characters and the world within. A solid paranormal read.

Jenn *loves dragons and wolves* says

I received this book for free in exchange for an honest review from LoP group.

This was a very entertaining book dealing with witches, mediums, the Rom, and ghosts. The plot and story line was very well written and very fast paced. I found it hard to put down. I liked how the author put all the characters from different walk of life together to solve the murders. The suspense was great. I recommend this book for anyone who likes books about witches and ghosts.

Evelyn Amaral says

A World Apart is Spellbinding

Well written, interesting characters, fast paced action, & supernatural drama! What's not to love! Read it in one day...can't wait to read the rest of the series!

Stéphanie says

~I received this book for free in exchange for a honest review.~

Rating: 3,5-4/5

Lena glanced up at him. "Everyone's avoiding you," she murmured. Grim satisfaction flashed over his face. "They should. I'm the big bad wolf." "So what does that make me?" MacMillian looked down at her. His lips twitched. "From where I'm standing, you look an awful lot like Little Red Riding Hood."

In this story you have two worlds with their codes and beliefs that collide (You can even said three, if you add the world of 'normal' lambda human).

On one side, you have Jesper MacMillian, a private detective, still adjusting to the loss of his leg and his brother, who is trying to avoid the inheritance of his family. He is a rom, appointed to take his grandfather's

place as the King, but refusing and rejecting that part of his life. At the beginning of the story, we get a glimpse of the communitarianism of the rom and I hope we will see more of it in the future books.

On the other side, you have Lena Alan. She is a strong, funny heroine. She is a medium that can talk to ghosts and help them to leave our plan. I really liked what we saw of the witches' community. It's a secret community apart from the normal world (rather similar to the roms in a way) that keeps the 'normal' humans safe from everything that "*bump in the night*".

Then one day, a rom, excluded from his community, is killed. While the ghost seeks Lena for help, the parents of Jimmy (the victim) go to Jesper to find their missing son. And then, Lena and Jesper met. During the investigations, we met Mark Durban, a police detective.

As a whole, I really liked this story. It's really well written and made you wish you don't have to put it down until the very last sentence. In fact, I read it in one sitting, that prove how good and engaging the story and the style were for me. :) When I started to read I was really excited and if I had to rate for the first parts and most of the rest to the end of the book, it would have been a five stars. There is just something in the middle that Lena did that just froze my poor little "Fleur Bleue" (sentimental, romantic) heart. But it's just me. In a way, it made her more real I suppose, I just didn't like it. (view spoiler) That's where the story lost 1.5 star.

As a whole either way, I really recommend the story.

This book is the first part of a series. While the bad guy pays for his crimes in the end, don't expect the 'happy ending' between the heroes. It will probably come in the future books. A WORLD APART contains a couple of scenes not suitable for children. Mature audience only.

Sue Lyssa Stone Shaffer says

I'm impressed

After awhile you begin to think you have seen all the possible urban fantasy twists possible. Then you find something not only different but something intriguing.

I enjoyed this first book and have picked up the sequels. A medium and an unwilling potential King of the Rom.... a witch, a hoodoo man, a priest and something as yet undefined. Somehow I think I'm going to be surprised as I keep reading..

Something new and wicked this way comes.

Melanie says

A pleasant surprise

I wasn't sure how much I would enjoy this book but I was pleasantly surprised. It is well written and draws you into the realistic characters. I look forward to reading the following installments of the series.

Charlotte Lowe says

A World Apart: A Shades Below Novel

This book is just the beginning in the understanding of these complex characters. Torment, family expectations, grief, nightmares, and more breathe life into each one.

Karen Voitik says

>Review - A World Apart -

>I received this from the author and from Paranormal Romance and Authors that Rock. I am an independent reviewer. This is the first book in the Shades Below series.

>Jesper MacMillian is a Romany king, who is refusing his station. Due to a violent accident, in which he lost both his brother and his leg, he is a private detective just barely living a life. When a new case has Jes crossing paths with medium, Lena Alan, a whole new realm of the world is opened to him. Soon, he is noticing that people he works with are not all they seem to be. I was a bit surprised at how the knowledge of ghosts was an unknown to Jes. He is a gypsy king and they believed in that sort of thing forever.

>Lena is a breath of fresh air. She has a really yucky job, sending souls on to the beyond, but seems to be a very positive person. There is a foreshadowing of an issue with Lena's dead older sister and some kind of shadow figure that manifests in her dreams. I was unable to tell if the shadow figure was a positive or a negative. I guess the next book will tell that tale.

>Jes and Lena seem to have an attraction. The attraction is not sexual. They seem to relate to each other in a deeper human contact sort of way. I am really rooting for them to become a couple. The monkey wrench in that scenario is a cop named Mark Durban. He owes Jes a favor and helps out in the investigation. Something that is never explained, happened between Jes and Mark. The result is a deep dislike of one another. Jes warns Lena away from Mark, but Mark and Jes begin a tentative relationship. This relationship is the only part of the book that didn't seem to fit. Mark seemed off, even Lena mentioned that feeling. She comes to trust Jes, but doesn't heed his warning? She also doesn't seem to be the type of girl to just sleep around. Even if the author was not ready for Jes and Lena to get together as a couple, I don't think we knew Lena enough to have her get together with anyone yet.

>The plot of the story was all supernatural, but the explanations were not so over powering that it turned a reader off. The story moved quickly and was very exciting. The ending of the story is a bit of a cliff hanger, in order to set up the next book. I haven't read a book this well written in a long while. The descriptions didn't go on forever, the dialogue wasn't stilted and the plot really moved. I highly recommend this story and cannot wait for book 2.

>This book is for an adult audience due to a mild sex scene, paranormal violence and language.

Emma Lindhagen says

This was a good read, pretty fast-paced and well-written. It's got an interesting set of characters, and I really liked the main female character, Lena (even though I felt like she had to be rescued a little too often than what seemed realistic for the level of competence she was supposed to have). I had a harder time with MacMillian, the male MC. There were some really interesting aspects to his character (which I don't have the competence to assess the quality of rep for), but I didn't take to him and (view spoiler)

Jennifer (BTH Reviews) says

I received a free 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.

4.5 stars

Review Courtesy of: Books That Hook

A World Apart was a really good read. I liked that the author kept the prologue short, then jumped right into the main character doing her medium thing. What I mean is that the reader doesn't have to wait for her to learn how to do it. Lena's already a skilled medium involved in a secret society. So, at least on her part, there isn't the issue of skepticism or denial. Lena does have to deal with skepticism from other characters, but at least she's confident in her abilities, which is a nice change from so many 'fish out of water' books I have read.

I did have a little trouble following in the chapters about MacMillian's family because of the use of foreign terms, because I couldn't remember what all the words meant. Once the story got to the point where MacMillian meets Lena and involves himself in finding Jimmy, I was moved along quickly and totally hooked. I thought the story flowed well. It was fast paced. At first I thought character development was being sacrificed to keep the action going, but later in the story I got to learn more about Lena and MacMillian's past.

The main thing I enjoyed about A World Apart was how the author mixed traditional detective work with a paranormal investigation. Lena and MacMillian had the same goal, but they approached it differently. Lena communicates with the spirits. MacMillian follows hunches and does traditional investigative work.

I'm looking forward to the next book in the series, where I hope some of the questions that weren't answered in this book will be answered, such as why MacMillian hates Mark so much, why Lena's family is so important to the paranormal community, and what the nature of Lena's shadows is.

I recommend A World Apart to readers who like books with ghosts, witches, and necromancers mixed with private investigation and a little romance.

This book is for 18+ due to sexual content and violence.

Desislava Pavlova says

I got the book free of charge from the author in exchange of an honest review through Lovers of Paranormal. The following review contains spoilers.

Rating 8 of 10

A very nice read for everyone who likes paranormal mysteries. The mystery is intriguing and so are the characters. MacMillian is skeptic but curious. non-believer but ready to stand-up against whatever "go bump in the night". At first I was skeptic I would grow to like him, he is not your typical hero. But with time he sort of grew on me. I only wish we got a better explanation what a "baro" is and how that is important. His dislike for Marc Durban was also unexplained but as this is first book in a series, that didn't bug me as much. Lena... I liked Lena. Mostly. She was funny, smart, likable character. And then she had to go and sleep with Marc. Which didn't fit. Not for her. Especially with the fact that MacMillian didn't like Marc and she knew it. At this point Lena already trusted the private detective, so why she didn't think more about why he doesn't trust Durban? He probably has a reason.

The mystery was interesting, not as much of who but of how and why. Will admit to not being a big fan of cliffhangers but it sure made me curious to read the next book. It looks like it will offer a wider range of night creatures and more mysteries to solve. But I think I'm mostly curious about the whole Jesper-Durban history. What really happened between these two?

sharon kirby says

Amazing

I absolutely loved this book so much that I had to read it from start to finish. This is an exciting start to a new series that I am looking forward to reading. I highly recommend this book.

RyooT says

A World Apart introduces a new series and cast of characters I have quickly come to enjoy. I am a big fan of detective/mystery novels, particularly when they feature a detective that doesn't fit the standard PI mould. Even though paranormal is not usually my preferred genre, the book's intro made me curious enough to give this story a try and I certainly wasn't disappointed.

PI Jesper MacMillian is still coming to terms with the after-effects of the accident that killed his brother and cost him his leg and has since distanced himself from his family. Against his wishes, the death of his grandfather puts him in a position he doesn't want to be in: he becomes Rom Baro, the head of the Kumpmania, a Romani community of families. When he is asked by one of these families to investigate the disappearance of their son, he reluctantly agrees. What seems like a mundane missing person case, quickly turns MacMillian's world upside down, however, when he meets tea shop owner and medium Lena Alan. Lena already knows that the missing person case is about to turn into the hunt for a killer, but when MacMillian shows up in her shop, she decides to take drastic measures to protect MacMillian and bring him

'up to speed'. So together they embark on the hunt, supported by a cast of interesting secondary characters. The world building is well executed and gave me a very vivid impression of the environment, without being excessively detailed. I really enjoyed the chemistry between the two protagonists and that both felt very realistic and grounded. Lena has her own shadows to deal with, figuratively as well as literally, but I really enjoyed the way the sparks fly between her and MacMillian and how their attraction for each other grows. I liked that the author gave her characters time to develop these feelings for each other slowly even while the story itself is unfolding at break-neck speed.

Some of the things that happen to Lena throughout the story are not fully explained and if this was a stand-alone novel it would have left me unsatisfied. These developments together with additional hints at Lena's as well as her family's past, give lot's of scope for further exploration and character development. So as an introduction to a series, I am happy to stay in the dark - for now.

Another noteworthy aspect of this book is the realism with which the author depicts MacMillian's disability. Too often I find authors using a disability as a plot device without real understanding, sometimes seemingly forgetting that their character has a disability at all. Not so in this case. Mannerisms and behaviours impacted by MacMillian's amputation are consistent throughout the story and well used to give depth and realism to his character.

I greatly enjoyed following this story unfold because everything that happened in this subversive, paranormal world was just realistic and believable enough to be possible - a keeper!

Judi Moore says

Originally written for "Big Al's Books and Pals" book blog. May have received a free review copy.

Genre: Urban Fantasy/whodunit

Description: This pretty much sums the book up: "There are things that go bump in the night, Mr. MacMillian. It's my job to bump back." In these two sentences we learn that Powonia (Lena) Alan is a medium, helping stranded souls cross over, comfortable and competent in her work for 'the other side', fazed by very little, and certainly in much better control in such situations than PI Jesper MacMillian, who is coming at this particular case from the side of the living. Delightful encapsulation.

Author: LJK Oliva says she writes urban fantasy and paranormal romance. That is all I can find out about her, despite her presence on Amazon, Goodreads, Facebook, Pinterest etc. The book under review is #1 in her Shades Below series. As well as things that go bump in the night, the series includes forays into vampiric and Ancient Egyptian plotlines.

Appraisal: This novel is a lot of fun (if one can say that of a novel about dead people). The protagonists are drawn to the same crime – a dreadful death – by the unquiet soul of the deceased (which is the ambit of Lena and her brother Cyrus) and by his parents (who engage the aforementioned MacMillian, together with a cop ex-buddy called Mark Durbin: Durbin and MacMillian have baggage). The story flitters between the living and the more or less deceased, drawing on well-established tropes, but also investing them with original thinking.

There is romance in the mix. MacMillian and Lena have chemistry from the off. But then she meets and quickly begins to date the absurdly gorgeous Durbin, giving opportunities for introspection and angst within that triangle.

As well as romance we have Romani characters (MacMillian is one) bringing their hierarchies, prejudices and empathies to play in the story.

Minor characters such as Emil and Puzzle are well fleshed-out too (and carry their own stories later in the Shades Below series). The idea that there are people in the world who have the surname 'Zarubabbel' on their driving licences pleases me immensely.

In Lena, Oliva draws a character who feels completely real, apart from her ability to see dead people. I, too, felt I would finally be a grownup when I bought my first new cooker. (I turned out to be wrong. So is Lena.) Lena runs a tea shop. She is an expert on tea, treating each infusion as a little ritual. Lena's inner monologue (through which much of the book is unfolded) is consistently believable and interesting.

However, one doesn't read the book for the tea infusion recipes. This is a fast-paced whodunit incorporating the spirit world. The interactions between the characters (living and not so much) keep the pace going lickety-split throughout. The episode of Jimmy-as-poltergeist was particularly delightful.

Format/Typo Issues: there was a slightly irritating tic involving short hyphens and missing spaces in the copy I read. Then there are the occasional malapropisms: 'caliper' for 'calibre'; 'tram' for 'pram', 'banquets' for 'banquettes'. There are some other odd word choices which provide a momentary puzzlement before one decides it doesn't matter and plunges back into the story. For example, I have no idea what 'in the Veil' refers to, nor how Powonia belongs 'in hospice'.

I became a little irked by the number of men in the book whose names began with D. (Especially when I needed to refer back when I came to write the review.) Durbin, Darius and Daniel is two Ds too many: there are 25 other letters in the alphabet...

But these are minor grumbles compared to the pleasure the book gave.

Lakshmi C says

This book revolves around a murder mystery in a paranormal setting. Jes MacMillan is trying to get back on his feet after an accident changed his life. Lena is a medium who is funny and used to dealing with the other side. Their worlds collide while investigating the murder of a young boy.

I loved that the book was fast paced and had a lot of twists. As they dig deeper and their troubles grow, they realize things are more dangerous than they seem. The supporting characters are unusual and its interesting to see them work together.

Both Lena and Jes are strong characters which makes this book a great read. Jes is struggling in the aftermath of his accident and manages to deal with the other side in a calm way. Lena is confident even when she is thrown in unfamiliar situations. She is struggling with the shadows of her past but doesn't allow them to hold her back.

I went through a lot of emotions while reading this book, fear, compassion, panic, curiosity, they are too

many list. The writing is addictive with a clever use of metaphors which made me smile. This book exceeded my expectations and I really enjoyed it.

I received this ARC in exchange for an honest review.
