



Teen Spirit

Francesca Lia Block

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Francesca Lia Block, critically acclaimed author of *Weetzie Bat*, brings this eerie and redemptive ghost story to life with her signature, poetic prose. It's perfect for fans of supernatural stories with a touch of romance like the *Beautiful Creatures* series by Kami Garcia and Margaret Stohl.

After Julie's grandmother passes away, she is forced to move across town to the not-so-fancy end of Beverly Hills and start over at a new school. The only silver lining to the perpetual dark cloud that seems to be following her? Clark—a die-hard fan of Buffy and all things Joss Whedon, who is just as awkward and damaged as she is. Her kindred spirit.

When the two try to contact Julie's grandmother with a Ouija board, they make contact with a different spirit altogether. The real kind. And this ghost will do whatever it takes to come back to the world of the living.

Francesca Lia Block's latest young adult novel is a haunting work about family, loss, love, and redemption.

Teen Spirit Details

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Author : Francesca Lia Block

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From Reader Review Teen Spirit for online ebook

Wendi Lee says

Julie's life collapses when her beloved grandmother passes away. She and her mother are forced to move into a dingy apartment, and she has to attend a new high school. Her only solace is a new friend, Clark. Clark's grieving as well - his twin brother passed away the year before. But when Clark and Julie use an Ouija board to contact Julie's grandmother, they end up summoning a different, more threatening spirit.

This was a solid paranormal book. I liked Julie and Clark, and their references to Buffy (squeee!!). I also like the metaphysical experts they consult along the way, with their own quirky attitudes. One big thing I did miss, however, was Block's signature lyrical writing style. The writing here is much more straight-forward and simple. Sigh. I think I need a Weetzie Bat re-read after this, with its pages and pages of beautiful descriptions, LA as a wonderland.

Diana says

The Dangerous Angels books by Francesca Lia Block are some of my all time favourite reads. I've kept up with her other books but none seemed to hit the mark. This one, while having some references that will date it, was better than some previous efforts. I'll remain true to this author and hope she can hit the heights again.

Janice says

I am not sure there are enough nice things I can say about this book. I will start with, "Teen Spirit" is the most movie-worthy young adult book I have read in some time. Every character, starting with the earthy yet vulnerable protagonist Julie, is someone you want to know more about.

The magical aspects of "Teen Spirit" not only entertaining, but also well researched. Anyone with basic knowledge of auras, Paganism, rituals, or anything slightly "occult" will recognize the clues Block sprinkles throughout the book.

Another facet of this book I loved was the seriously twisted, original, and just-plain-strange love triangle. That is really all I can say about that without giving too much away.

Last big bonus that made me *lovelove* this book: awesome pop culture references to books, music, movies, and to the one-and-only-God, Joss Whedon.

At the end, I wanted more. I would like to see another book following Julie. Perhaps, "College Spirit" could follow.

Jessika says

I love FLB so, so much.

There is really just NO ONE else like her. Not even close. She is almost like her own genre, y'know?

So anyways. I've had this gem since it came out last year, and just didn't get around to it (though I definitely

gushed over the super gorgeous magical-creepy-kitschy cover many a time, tehee).

But yeah, the depth and scope of the story totally caught me off guard.

Don't get me wrong... she is hands-down a master of lyrical, absolutely decadent (and sometimes a lil disturbing) darkness! I loooooove it.

But for some reason I thought that this story would be slightly different in some way, like... that I might not love *quite* as much.....? If that makes sense?

But it totally surprised me! It *was* different from what I'd expected, but in a way that was even better than I hoped for! ^__^

I did have somewhat mixed feelings before I started this one, because some of the reviews for it weren't so great, which made me sad. I was also a little wary because the summaries on the back of the book and the inner jacket came off, to me at least, in a certain way that seemed to fall short of what I thought she'd be writing around now. But now, after reading the book, I realize that the summaries (in my opinion) just didn't accurately convey the heart of this book.

I absolutely loved it. It does incorporate a lot of things that I absolutely adore, so that probably added to some of my love for it. It also gave me a lot of insight and optimism towards some personal things going on in my life right now, which was a wonderful surprise :)

For me, this story was kind of like a shooting star. Amidst a whole bunch of darkness, worry, fear, and straight-up cold reality, the main character, even when she doubts herself, continues to blaze on and endure and overcome a lot of hardship (and weird shit, lol). And all the while, it definitely maintained it's magic.

I felt so hopeful after I finished reading it.

I feel so hopeful right now, cause I just finished reading it.

Thank you, Francesca Lia Block, for yet another fantastic piece of literature ?

Catfairy Books says

When I first picked up a Francesca Lia Block at 16 years old it was at a time that I felt lost and felt those typical teenage feelings like no one understood me. (This book brought me back to my teenage self so much that I was even inspired to catch a few Buffy the Vampire episodes for old times on Netflix...will explain as to why later on:)) Francesca Lia Block had the remarkable ability to make me see the beauty in my life and to see the beauty in myself even through all my quirks and eccentricities. Reading the book "Teen Spirit" resurfaced those feelings for me again. Francesca Lia Block's writing style has always been prevalent in all her books but this book in particular reminded me of her Dangerous Angels series in so many parts of the book. After reading this book I think that Francesca Lia Block should continue a series and show Julie in college and so on. The story was so entertaining and the characters were so complex and intriguing that they should be brought back for a second round!

The story begins with Julie...

Julie is an awkward teenager with a pension for vintage clothes who is absolutely content with her life living in her 1940's Spanish style house with her mom and grandma. Her mom is a writer for a television show and her grandmother is Julie's rock and she is always the person that Julie can confide in when it comes to her high school woes, boys and their common love for vintage clothing. Julie takes comfort with her simple life until things don't become as simple as they used to be. It all started when her grandmother is just having a conversation with Julie and she is about to reveal something important and then without warning Julie's grandmother passes away in front of her. Julie and her mother are completely shocked and lost without her

and things take a turn for the worse after the grandmother's passing. Julie's mother loses her writing job and they are forced to foreclose on their house and move to an apartment and Julie had to change schools.

Julie slowly gets deeper into her depression and realizes that she can't function in her life without her grandma. Julie doesn't even have the support from her own mother who is going into online dating and begins to date a loser middle aged guy in a band who likes to wear fishnet stockings. Julie is desperate to see her grandma and find a way to communicate with her. Then once she starts her new school she meets a goofy guy named Clark who has a pension for wearing zany hats such as moose hats, monkey hats, porkpie hats, obsessed with Buffy the Vampire Slayer and he enjoys eating kicharee.

As Julie gets to know Clark she discovers there is more to Clark than his wacky hats and his culinary talents. She shares with him her loss of her grandmother and expresses a desire to contact her grandmother. As soon as Julie mentions the ouija board to Clark he is reluctant to do it with her and tries to keep her away from it. Soon enough Julie finds out his real reasons for staying away from the ouija board...

Julie evokes an unexpected spirit and therefore begins a twisted love triangle that involves Clark and a boy named Grant who claims to be Clark's twin brother. Grant is the bad boy version of Clark and is more of the sexy 4.0 version of Clark minus the nerdy hats...

One of the main aspects of the book that really intrigued me were the supernatural scenes such as the auras that Julie had the ability to see with each person she met, the rituals, the glass bottles of flower-and-gem essences, and not to mention the aura ring that Julie was instructed to wear that resembled a mood ring which is something that I have always loved to wear as a kid.

Even though this book is classified as young adult the writing is so exceptional that anyone could pick up the book and be able to enjoy it in some way. Reading this book brought back memories for me of when I first began to read her books and her writing of this book made me realize why I love Francesca Lia Block so much!

Teen Spirit was everything that I hoped for in a supernatural read and more! I felt like I was on a journey right there with Clark and Julie and I was loving every minute of it! I loved how Francesca Lia Block wrote the characters of Julie and Clark because they were easy to love but they were real teenagers with their flaws, insecurities and angst to go along with it. She delved into the characters stories so fluidly and I was rooting for Clark and Julie to finally have their own happy ending every step of the way! The most important lesson that I learned from this book is that death is something we shouldn't dwell over and obsess about because our beautiful and complicated lives are right in our very own fingertips...

Ashley Ehlers says

Originally posted on Paranormal Sisters: <http://paranormalsisters.blogspot.com...>

I'm utterly disappointed, this book was meh and I was absolutely bored throughout it. There were little dashes where I was entertained but then those moments would flicker away, not going to their full potential. Nothing exciting or scary happened, I wasn't sitting on the edge of my seat. And the romance, what romance? It was absolutely boring and there was nothing romantic about it. There was no development for it.

At first I thought it was just the first 50 pages, the world building, for why it was boring...but then I got deeper into the book and nothing was happening. I feel like something was holding back the author when it came to the supernatural part of the book or maybe it was just her style of writing I didn't like. Where she gave glimpses of things that can't be explained and then doesn't go deeper into those things. Like Julie can see auras and has very symbolic dreams but they don't really go into explaining why she has these gifts, just leads on where they make you think "could this be why?".

Honestly it was just silly watching her make the same mistake over and over again. I get it, everyone handles grief in their own way. But you'd think she would know not to mess with an Ouija board. Overall this was very lackluster and I didn't really connect with the characters. It's a simple read but at one point I wanted to quit the book all together. I was hopeful things would get exciting....I knew I was going to be wrong.

Nicki says

Not her best work. I have been reading Francesca Lia Block since I was in high school and have kept up with every release she has made since then, this was quite a disappointment. Both of the characters are weak, underdeveloped, and uninteresting. The references to modern music seemed like a desperate attempt to connect with the audience.

The book seems so forced, like the author was trying to jump on that fantasy/romance thing that has all the Twilight fans screaming for more. It's cheap. And half of the book seemed like a fashion magazine with the way the main character described every single outfit she wore. We get it, vintage fashion and tiny bodies are cool.

It could be that I am getting too old for these types of fantasy stories, but when I go back and re-read some of Block's earlier books I am still in love with them. I really hope that she does not get caught up in the tween fantasy craze that seems to be flooding the market; I really liked her as a poet with a mind of her own.

Marie says

The review box on Goodreads is topped with "What did you think?" Honestly, for this book, I'd just shrug my shoulders and mumble something noncommittal. Like "meh." This was my first Francesca Lia Block; are all of her books like this one? Is this a good litmus? Because if so I have a hard time understanding all the "let's bow down and worship at the throne of FLB, the greatest YA author of the last couple decades!" I don't know; I did read this while not feeling great with some kind of vague stomach something or other so maybe that colored my feelings. I still don't think it would have earned more than 3 stars, even under optimal circumstances.

So Julie lives a rather ok life in an upper-middle-class part of Beverly Hills. She lives with her mom and her grandmother and there's much love in the house. Then grandma dies. And Julie thinks she saw her grandma's aura leave her body as she died. And now Julie & her mom are kind of falling apart and they have to move into a seedier apartment across town. Things are not looking good for Julie, but she does find a friend, Clark, who's pretty much perfect. He's kind of geeky cute and he loves Joss Whedon and he's nice and he shares his homemade lunch with Julie every day. One day Julie and Clark decide to contact Julie's grandma via a Ouija board. No good comes of this. They do get in contact with a spirit... but it's not grandma...

Ugh. I just feel like I spent the whole book bored and angry. Bored because there are NO surprises. The reader sees everything coming. And angry because Julie just keeps making stupid choice after stupid choice. I would've said this could just be a very-young teen book, but there's some "tender loving" near the end so that's out the window. Ugh. I don't know. Maybe this could hook a reluctant reader. Who also likes paranormality. Who also likes romance. A pretty narrow niche.

Ashley Daviau says

I absolutely adored this book! I was expecting something cheesy and cute and while it was cute, it was also much more than that and most definitely not cheesy. This book deals with issues that all of us have dealt with, especially the loss of loved ones and that makes it very real and easy to relate to. I really enjoyed seeing Julie and Clark deal with their losses. And I especially enjoyed the element of spirits that was mixed in, it made the story that much more interesting! I wasn't really sure how it would play out in the end but I'm really pleased with how it did, it was the perfect ending!

Haley says

Teen Spirit is a short, fast, and fun read. It's a standalone, and it's a complete story. It contains interesting and unique characters and paranormal twists. It's set in Beverly Hills and the Los Angeles area of California. Julie, the main character, had a grandmother who recently died. Her mother, a TV writer, loses her job about a year later, and Julie has to move from Hollywood to Beverly Hills, from a house to an apartment.

Julie is half Cherokee and Jewish. Her father was just a sperm donor, so she never met him. Julie also has a gift. She can see auras and have prophetic dreams. Julie meets Clark, a quirky vegan guy who shares Julie's love for Buffy. Clark is very atypical of love interest characters. He first becomes her best friend and they don't really become boyfriend and girlfriend.

Clark has had a recent loss too, but he doesn't tell Julie till later on in the story. Julie's psychic abilities make spirits come to her, so after using a Ouija Board to contact her dead grandma on Halloween, a spirit begins to haunt Julie and Clark and they search for a way to rid themselves of the spirit, even though they may wish to keep this spirit around for personal reason.

Teen Spirit is full of humor and pop-culture references. There's romance and a little mystery. It's mostly filled with fun paranormal, but it's also a light-hearted, poetic story about dealing with grief and growing up. As this author has done before, she managed to fit an exciting story into a short book. You could read it easily in one sitting. I recommend this book to fan of the Ghost Huntress series and other ghost stories. Also for fans of books by this author, or Cyn Balog. This book would be okay for younger teens too because the easy reading level, but there are some profanities.

Cover Art Review: The cover is cute and fits the book. It's wood with engraving-like text and images. It looks like a Ouija Board. I love the rose quartz hear pointer.

~Haley G

My blog:

Teresa Barrera says

This was a pretty quick read, great for passing the time waiting at the dr's office or a trolley ride, etc.

I admit the cover reached out and claimed my eyeballs and I had to pick it up to read.

Julie is devastated after the passing of her grandmother and to top it off, her mother loses her job forcing them to move out of her grandmother's home and into an apartment. Julie also has to start over at a new school.

At her new school she meets Clark who's awkward and imbalanced and they become fast friends. One night they decide to try to contact Julie's grandmother Miriam through an ouija board Julie found after moving into her apartment. But the ghost they contact isn't her grandmother, but that of another who intends on staying. I can't say that this book is among my favorites as I was hoping for more of a creepy atmosphere and edge of the seat moments, but I enjoyed reading.

CiderandRedRot says

This novel rubbed me all up the wrong way, which is a shame because: Ouija boards, weird paranormal crap, vintage stores, possessed fridges, Hollywood bungalows, teens adjusting to a dramatic downgrading of economic status? All big hell yeah checkmarks in my book. But I found this book to be more of an icky paranormal romance masquerading as a ghost story. I'd heard good things about Block and she writes well; well enough that I ended up speed-reading through this zippy, short novel with a weird mixture of anger and boredom because the prose is tight, but the storyline is whack.

After her beloved grandmother dies, Julie and her mother's financial situation takes a downturn. Now living in a dingy apartment and attending a different school, she finds some solace in her burgeoning friendship with fellow newbie-nerd Clark, until an evening spent messing around with an Ouija board stirs up a not-so-friendly spirit.

Julie was an admirably levelheaded, albeit slightly written, character until the R-word reared its head. I *loathed* the romantic aspects, loathed them to the extent that I ended up disliking Julie as a result. Clark was written as a hipster with a fondness for unironic hat-wearing who carries about another culture's foodstuff in a clay pot as some kind of alternative touchstone. He makes mixtapes of bands that his peers just don't get, yo. Grant was a creeper perve with no redeeming features but better hair. There are some truly horrible sexystime scenes that were weirdly graphic in such an otherwise simply written, almost middle school-ish book.

Also, can we talk about the Buffy references? I love Buffy; it defined my late teens and early twenties. Buffy will always be damn cool with me, but here it felt more like Block's concept of cool than an organic geeky teen's fan experience. Maybe that's just me? Hey, nevermind (totes Nirvana reference), let's go dance to Jepsen and Gaga. Oy, I fear this book will not date well with the youths.

Wrapping up: I felt the plot twists were flagged a mile off, to the extent that Clark's line on pg.33 about (view spoiler) basically tipped me off to everything that came subsequently, and I'm not that bright. The

moment Grant arrived being all mysteriously cryptic and shit, I was all, (view spoiler). I also found the throwaway Native American (hey guys, great sage! thanks for being mystical, would consult again!) plot aspects to be a bit gimicky and unresolved. As was the side plot with Julie's mum - an horrific twatball of the first order - and Obviously Bad Man Luke, damn his fishnets.

Deborah Markus says

Block's most famous books, "Weetzie Bat" and "Witch Baby," are pass or fail tests. You're either enchanted by them and therefore willing to forgive some overblown language and bursts of woo, or you're knocked over by waves of purple prose and nauseated by all the freakin' adorableness.

I tend toward cranky and despise woo, so I was as surprised as anyone to find myself in love with these two books.

For their sake, I keep giving Block a try now and then. I read "Pink Smog" and "Necklace of Kisses" and "Cherokee Bat and the Goat Guys" and didn't like any of them. I started "Missing Angel Juan" and couldn't finish it. Ditto "The Hanged Man" and "The Rose and the Beast." They seemed to have all the annoyingness of those first two books and none of the enchantment.

I'm kind of a dork, so I put a library hold on "Teen Spirit" as soon as I knew it existed.

And it turned out to be really good. "I'm happy I read that" good. "I might just read that again" good.

No out-there, overly poetic prose. No long long lists. No cringe-inducing "touching" moments.

Instead, Block uses straightforward language and believable dialogue to let her teenage heroine Julie tell the story of what happens when her grandmother dies, her mother disappears into grief, and Julie struggles to find her place in the world.

Her only friend is a boy who, like her, is drawn toward death. They're not suicidal; they just keep straining to see past the barrier to the other side. Even their favorite show, "Buffy The Vampire Slayer," is peopled as much by the living dead as by the just-plain living.

I can't say much more about the plot, because you need to be surprised by an element that dominates the story starting from about a third of the way through. There is technically a love triangle, but I swear it's not annoying and turns out to be beautifully symbolic. Julie has moments of worrying about her looks, because she has some unusual features and like the rest of us she longs to be just-plain conventionally beautiful; but after a while she accepts the evidence that she's attractive, and doesn't spend centuries wondering what on earth any boy would see in her (coughBELLAcough).

"Teen Spirit" touches a few of my annoyance buttons. I really dislike when writers seem to forget how money works. Julie's mother loses her job. For reasons we're never told, she'd been unable to pay the mortgage for months even before that happened. Her house is foreclosed on, and she and Julie move to a small apartment.

Okay. But this is Southern California (my own personal stomping grounds). How are they paying even for a two-bedroom apartment close enough to Beverly Hills High that Julie can legally attend? I know from

personal experience that not all of Beverly Hills is Beverly Hills-expensive. I also know that apartments in even half-decent neighborhoods are not cheap. Julie's mother doesn't get a job for months. They don't have money from the house because they lapsed on the mortgage. How the heck are they paying any rent at all, let alone what has to be at least a thousand dollars a month (probably more)?

Julie is a believable character – a smart girl, a reader, a perceptive observer. She has psychic gifts that she struggles to understand and utilize. I like all that.

She does occasionally suffer from a condition I just ran into in the heroine of "Longbourne": namely, she's insistently inquisitive in general, but drops the questions when pushing farther would reveal too much too soon plot-wise. That's lazy storytelling, authors. Yes, your readers notice. We're not idiots. We're asking the same questions your characters were before you made them stop for no stated reason.

And yeah, there are lapses into telling over showing. Having to leave the house she grew up in, a house that symbolizes a very happy childhood and her adored grandmother, is wrenching for Julie. "I wanted to tie myself to the door of the house so that the bank would have to let us stay," she says. Which is good. But it's followed by, "I couldn't stand the idea of another loss."

We kind of got that from the previous sentence, actually. Have a little faith in us, okay? We're readers. We're paying attention. We promise.

"Teen Spirit" isn't plagued by these errors. If anything, they stick out because the rest of the book is so strong. The story is compelling. It carried me along to an ending that made me want to cheer (and I don't know if I've mentioned this, but I am not a cheerleader). At the risk of sounding like an after-school special, I have to say this book really does teach important lessons about love and survival and making your way in the world, as well as the importance of knowing when to ask for help and knowing when you can rely on your own strength.

Oh, and if you like your reads terrifying, Julie has a nightmare that's probably going to give *me* nightmares for the rest of the week. The scariest part of it is a man simply pointing to a swimming pool.

(shiver)

So, yeah. Read this book.

Bunny says

Only six months since adding it to the to-read list. Sweet. The last time I tried to read a FLB book, it did not end well. Fingers crossed.

I am disappointed.

But not because this book was awful. Really and truly, it wasn't. Julie is a really great character, as was Clark. Even The Mother was a great representation of depression and grief.

The plot was really interesting, up until the very very end. It was a bit heavy handed, with the ouija board just magically being in the drawer, and falling from the shelf in the closet. But her continuous need to keep going, to contact her grandmother even when things started getting way too weird. All of that I liked.

Then we get to the last bits, (view spoiler) It felt like a huge lead up with very little pay off.

Truth be told, and I need to slap myself for this comparison, but I get Twilight vibes off this. Not in the writing style, mind you. FLB is actually a really good writer, and I wouldn't mind reading something else by her (other than the first one I tried). But just the relationship parts, and the...can you call that a love triangle?

And what was with (view spoiler)

Overall, it's not a bad book. The problem I'm having...

I've read more YA since I turned 30 than I ever did between the ages of 12-18. In my YA time, I read Stephen King, and true crime novels. The only YA I ever bothered with was Christopher Pike and books of that ilk.

And despite being slightly embarrassed to have favorite librarian, when reccing me a few new books, ask, "Wait, do you ever read adult novels?", I defend my liking of YA, because the authors work harder than adult authors, and the plots are rich and full and hopeful.

This was the first YA book where I felt too old for YA.

Despite the cursing and almost sex scene, this is just...really, really YA. And I'm not in the demographic for this book.

Ah, well. The *Buffy* references could've earned this four stars. If it had just been the word "Buffy", along with "Oooh, supernatural happenings, I feel like I'm in Buffy", I probably would've been a bit twitchy. But there were honest to goodness references, including talking about *The Body* and research.

That was a nice little smile every time one appeared. And it made me create a new GoodReads shelf for those moments.

Candace Robinson says

I was pretty stoked to read this book when my friend gave it to me. I hadn't heard of it, and you know what? It was awesome! Bring on the Ouija boards!

What I loved best about this book was it had quirkiness, weirdness, and fun times! Julie was likable and frustrating, yet cool, all in the same package. Clark was so cute and he seriously reminded me of Duckie from *Pretty in Pink*!

Overall, this is a fun little mystery that still had some good emotional aspects. The writing was great and I can't wait to read more from the author! This one will have a permanent spot on my bookshelf!

