



# The Otherworldlies

*Jennifer Anne Kogler*

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## **The Otherworldlies** Jennifer Anne Kogler

Fern communicates with her dog, blisters from just moments in the sun, and has correctly predicted the daily weather for more than two years. Even so, she's always seemed to be a normal twelve-year-old girl . . . until one day when Fern closes her eyes in class and opens them seconds later on a sandy beach miles away from school. When Fern disappears again, this time to a place far more dangerous, she begins to realize exactly "how" different she is.

With the help of her twin brother, Sam, Fern struggles to gain control of her supernatural powers. The arrival of a sinister vampire in town--who seems to have an alarming interest in Fern's powers--causes Fern to question her true identity. Who "is" she? More importantly, who can she count on? Soon Fern finds herself in the middle of a centuries-old battle--one that could destroy Fern and endanger everyone she loves.

## **The Otherworldlies Details**

Date : Published June 1st 2008 by Eos

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Author : Jennifer Anne Kogler

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Genre : Young Adult, Paranormal, Vampires, Fantasy

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# From Reader Review The Otherworldlies for online ebook

## Endless Forest says

It's so cool! I got to meet the author! awesome!

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## Cindy Mitchell \*Kiss the Book\* says

Kogler, Jennifer Anne The Otherworldlies, 383 p. Eos (Harper), 2008.

Fern has never looked like the others in her family, but she had no idea how different she actually was. Her twin brother, Sam, has done his best to protect her from the scorn of the students, but even he is feeling the strain. Then, something happens that alerts the entire world that Fern really is different. Now both friends and enemies are converging to control Fern's life and possibly her power.

Does that sound obscure enough? I don't want to give away too much - but you will LOVE this book! Every library that has Twilight in it needs to buy this one right away!! There - enough secrets given away.

MS, HS - ESSENTIAL. Cindy, Library-Teacher.

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## Erin says

Reading young adult fiction is such a slippery slope. Sometimes it just doesn't work for anyone other than its intended audience.

I imagine that would be the case with The Otherworldlies, the debut novel of author Jennifer Anne Kogler. It wasn't that it was such a bad book, really -- it just wasn't for me.

Vampire books are trendy now, and Kogler has gotten on the bandwagon with her take on the theme. Her heroine, 12-year-old Fern, has always been a little different. Her first two baby teeth were sharp canines, she is "allergic" to the sun -- getting a blistering sunburn in a matter of minutes -- and can talk to animals. And as if those things don't make it hard enough to fit in in middle school, she also randomly disappears from class spontaneously and reappears in strange places.

And I thought acne and training bras were bad.

Of course, Fern soon learns that she is, in fact, a vampire through the help of an unlikely friend at school. The question is, is she a Rollins -- a good, Cullen-esque type of vampire that doesn't feed from humans and wants to live side-by-side with the "Normals", or is she a Blout, a superior vampire that feels it's their divine right to take what they need from the human race.

The fact that an uber-bad Otherworldlie named Vlad has taken an interest in Fern doesn't bode well, either.

I think the reading level and social situations posed by the book make it most appropriate for middle school

students -- they should love Fern and her brothers, and the fantastic new twist on vampires that Kogler has imagined. The Otherworldlies is the first of a series, so there are lots of adventures ahead for Fern. I won't, however, be following along.

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## **Karissa says**

I've had this book on my pile to read for a while. It sounded interesting and a bit creepy. It ended up being and okay book and not at all what I thought it was going to be. This book is definitely more at a middle grade level and is more of a fantasy than anything even remotely creepy.

Fern is different from the other children. She can do things other kids can't; predict the weather, talk with her dog, and hear other people's conversations from far away. Different isn't necessarily good though, especially in middle school. Fern struggles every day to fit in and it is only her twin brother, Sam, that helps her make it through the day. Then one day Fern disappears from class only to reappear at the beach...well this is something that can no longer be ignored. One of her fellow classmates tells her that she is an Otherworldly, basically a vampire, and that Fern may be one of the Unusual Eleven (powerful Otherworldlies who have been lost to the race). Now Fern gets caught up in the struggle between the good and bad vampires.

There were some things I liked about this book and some things I didn't. I liked Fern's unique and interesting powers and the idea of her being a different type of race of human. I didn't like that the author then had to call the Otherworldlies a type of vampire; I kind of rolled my eyes and wished that Kogler hadn't gone with a YA vampire standard and that she had kept her characters as a unique race all in their own.

I liked the relationship Fern has with her brothers and her mother; I also enjoyed Fern's family playing such a big role in the story. It was great to see her mother included in the storyline since in so many of the YA books the kids are separated from their parents. I loved how supportive Fern's family was of each other.

I did not like the pace of this book. Things move very slowly in the beginning and it take forever to get to the meat of the story; once you start getting to the really interesting parts (about half way through) you feel like you never learn enough but are just scratching the surface. To me the story felt a bit shallow, like it never quite got where it wanted to go. Fern and Sam were interesting but kind of two dimensional; I never really liked either of them or sympathized with them.

I also thought this book was more of a middle grade novel than a young adult novel. Fern's problems are more at a middle grade level; mostly teasing and not getting along with classmates. She doesn't have a love interest and her interactions with the bad vampires never really get violent or desperate. The writing style itself is also fairly simplistic and at a lower reading level; there wasn't a ton of description and you never really hear Fern's thoughts to see how she is really feeling about everything. From the synopsis this sounded like it was going to be a creepy read, but it never feels creepy or even dangerous.

Overall it was an okay story. Fern is an interesting character, but hard to relate too. Kogler's concept of vampires is fresh and new; but worked better before she defined them as vampires, she should have left them as a separate race. The pacing of the book was slow and at times kind of boring; you feel like you are just barely scraping the surface of this world. I probably won't be reading any more books in this series. I just wasn't drawn into the writing or story and there are a ton of other young adult books out there that deal with these types of topics in a more interesting way. If you are a fan of YA and vampires check out Vampire Academy by Richelle Mead or any of the other plethora of vampire YA out there.

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### **Auralia says**

I have found another Vampire book that I love. This one is for teens and is NOT a romance. It is about a girl named Fern who is a bit odd. She is allergic to the sun, has really sensitive eyes and does not fit in at school. Where as her twin brother is perfectly normal and fits in just great at school. Fern discovers that she is actually a Vampire and that there is more to being a Vampire than just being allergic to the sun. Fern with the help of her twin, Sam, finds out what it is to be a vampire. I found this book to be suspenseful, intriguing, and a really good read. I read the book in one day, it was fantastic and I had a hard time putting it down. What a great vampire book. I hope that she writes a sequel because I really want to know what happens to Fern.

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### **TonksToes says**

I read this a while ago but I remeber that I liked it. And I just finished re-reading it so I can read the sequel.

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### **Rachael says**

Fern is an unusual girl, and in middle school, that's just not acceptable. Every day, she has to deal with others' spite over her strange qualities and habits such as blistering from sun exposure, a knack for accurate weather prediction, hearing voices without bodies, and talking with her dog. But what she doesn't know is that she isn't normal; she's a vampire, or an Otherworldy. And among those, she's one of the most special, because her unique ability to teleport distinguishes her as one of the foretold Unusual Eleven. Fern soon finds herself in the midst of an ages-old battle between the two factions of Otherworldies that could destroy her, the people she loves, and possibly the entire world.

The Otherworldies was a fantastic and action-filled combination of vampirism, ancient mythology, and supernatural powers; it was incredible how Kogler linked the three together even though they may seem to be unrelated. The plot was very fast moving and kept me on the edge of my seat, especially as the story neared its ending. I loved how this story kept me guessing right up until the end and how some of the characters I thought were insignificant turned out to be crucial to the plot. You really have no idea what's going to happen next. Besides having a well-written plot, The Otherworldies also has creative characters. My favorite was Fern; I found her to be much more mature than her twelve years would suggest as well as witty and resourceful.

Readers looking for a suspenseful, well-written, and unique read should most definitely check out The Otherworldies. Although I believe this novel is considered in the middle grade genre, teens and adults will also enjoy this story.

reposted from <http://thebookmuncher.blogspot.com>

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## **Nina says**

I hadn't heard much things about this book, but the cover looked too great to pass it by. There are so many vampire books, that at first I thought that this may even look like those books, but I am glad that it wasn't.

The characters are really great. Sam and Fern had the best siblings relationship that I ever read in a book. I loved that he was so protective of her and the whole time looked out for her. I liked Fern a lot, but in some situations she could use a back bone. In situations at school where friends of Sam told him his sister was weird, he could have been more helpful and tell them back off. But I did understand him a lot.

The power of teleporting is such a cool power to have. I mean common, wouldn't that be fun! For Fern the power means that she gets a friend, Lindsey who doesn't think Fern is strange or a freak and with the whole ride gets to know herself better.

As I said in the beginning the book has vampires in them, but they are not like the vampires we always read about in other YA vampire books. The vampires have of course powers, but they are combined with Greek mythology. I thought this was very original.

Suspenseful till the end, a great plot and cute characters. A must read for younger teens who love paranormal books/ vampires.

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## **Courtney says**

Hmmm. Another vampire novel. Ok, so I'll grant that it was an interesting take on the whole vampire thing, but I couldn't help but feel that the word "vampire" is becoming a catch-all for mysterious supernatural beings. Fern is a twin, but couldn't possibly look or act any more differently from her twin. She's been ostracized at school and has some challenging physical issues, like blistering when out in the sun too long. She can communicate with dogs and make water move with her mind. And then she starts teleporting. While is troublesome if you find yourself on the very top of Magic Mountain with TV cameras pointed at you while you wait for someone to get you down. Lo and behold, Fern finds out that she not really who she thought she was. She's not even human. And there are a couple of warring factions of vamps that both have an unhealthy interest in her.

What follows is, well, kind of a mess. There's a lot of stuff going on here and a lot of it is difficult to connect to an actual purpose in the plot. For instance, the whole Greek mythology thing? Cool and all, but other than sort of explaining why she can move water, it doesn't explain what, if anything vampires have to do with the ancients. I guess we're supposed to believe that vampires evolved from them, but it doesn't really hold with the whole vampires creating other vampires thing. In fact, there are so many bizarre characteristics involved that the vampires barely resemble vampires at all (except for the bad guys, who at least drink blood). I mean, gastro-intestinal issues? What does that have to do with anything? Talking to dogs really only seems to be good for gathering incriminating gossip. Why even bother calling these supernatural beings "vampires" at all? Marketing? I don't know if this is supposed to be part of a series or what, but there's so much left unexplained that I'm thinking it must be. At least it held my interest through to the end. This was supposed to be a selection for my middle school book group, but we've officially been snowed out and not yet rescheduled. I will be interested to hear what my teens have to say about this book. Many of them are getting sick of the vampire genre and I've got to wonder if the quirks in this novel are enough to set it apart from the rest for them.

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## **Alissa says**

This was a cute book. An easy read due to it being for the young ones but I liked it

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## **Jennifer Wardrip says**

Reviewed by Candace Cunard for TeensReadToo.com

Twelve-year-old Fern McAllister is the black sheep of her family, set apart by pale skin that blisters after moments in the sun and dark black hair in a family of blondes. Her strange sensitivity to light, and seeming ability to communicate with the family dog, are secondary concerns to the kids at her middle school who tease her for having an absent father. Despite gaining herself the nickname "freaky Fern," she leads a generally happy life, thanks to her mother's caring and her twin brother Sam's friendship.

But one day in the middle of English, Fern simply disappears. No one can find her; no one has seen her leave the room, much less her desk. Unbeknownst to her classmates, Fern has somehow managed to teleport to Pirate Cove, her favorite part of a nearby beach. Frightened and unsure of how she got there, Fern tries to tell the truth, but her mother isn't believing it and neither is the school's headmaster. The next time she vanishes and reappears, it is to a much more dangerous location, and by then it's impossible for Fern to keep her activities under wraps. It's only after a series of dangerous accidents that Fern discovers the truth of her identity and the full extent of her powers as an "otherworldly," the politically correct term for any creature that is not entirely human.

Kogler does a wonderful job of detailing the average twelve-year-old's insecurities and the way that they are magnified in Fern, who is anything but average. She presents a compelling picture of what it's like to grow up different in a world where schoolchildren are cruel and ostracize people who don't fit in. I found Fern, Sam, and their mother to all be very sympathetic and believable characters, whose motivations were easy to accept.

I also enjoyed Kogler's conception of the titular "otherworldlies," which made this book refreshingly different from other vampire stories I have read. Her use of Greek myths as the starting point for a number of inhuman creatures and supernatural powers put a new spin on the traditional vampire myths.

Overall, *THE OTHERWORLDLIES* was a satisfying read, with a plot that asked more questions than it answered but still managed to come to some kind of conclusion. Kogler's left herself open for a sequel, perhaps even an entire series, about Fern's future, and I for one look forward to whatever she comes up with next.

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## **Sarah Sammis says**

The Otherworldlies by Jennifer Anne Kogler is about Fern trying to figure out why she's so much different

from her fraternal twin, Sam. She's paler than pale, to the point of needing massive amounts of sunscreen to go anywhere. She can accurately predict the weather — always and talk to her dog. All those things she has learned to live with, but accidentally teleporting from school to the beach in the middle of a class, is a whole other thing!

The first two thirds of *Otherworldlies* is set in San Juan Capistrano. Besides Fern's teleportation problem, and the ire it creates with her mother, there are the swallows falling dead from the sky. The dead birds add a feeling of dread to a story that would otherwise seem like a lighthearted YA paranormal novel.

As with many YA books, Sam and Fern are children of a single mother. Their mother runs the home with military precision, another usual plot device to complicate the hero's plans. Except, this time, the mother's reasons, once revealed make sense and make her a believable and sympathetic character.

I especially loved the setting, San Juan Capistrano and later Coronado Island in San Diego. As a native Californian, I always perk up when the setting is somewhere I'm familiar with. Both locations, while molded for artistic license, are still recognizable and still resplendent with their local personalities. How Coronado island is described, especially, made me giggle for the juxtaposition of the paranormal use and the mundane use.

I plan to read book two, *The Siren's Cry* which came out in 2011.

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### **Carolynnjean says**

This is a great book for the young teen crowd. Entertaining throughout the beginning, middle, to end. A fantasy read about vampires, yet not all too crazy and disbelieving. 12 year old Fern is an outsider where she lives and feels she has no one that can relate to her. She soon goes on an adventure and discovers who she truly is, and feels not so different but more so special. Loved this book!

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### **Leah (Simply Nerdy Book Reviews) says**

Fern is really weird--or at least she's not normal. She can talk to her dog, Byron, hears Voices in her mind (that are usually talking about her), has predicted the correct weather for over two years, and blisters after just moments in the sun light. But, really, other than that, Fern's somewhat similar to your average twelve-year-old . . . until she disappears in the middle of her English class to find herself at the beach. Doesn't sound TOO bad, right? But what if the next place she disappears to isn't as . . . CALMING, let's say? Fern still has no clue JUST how different--and powerfull--she is.

When the arrival of an extremely dangerous vampire becomes known, Fern starts to wonder who she really is. More troublesome, what is she? And who can she trust?

What I thought: This novel was shocking. It completely amazes me, how unlike it is from every other vampire-related young adult novel. I must say: the idea is absolutely fantastic; the characters are strong (not as in lifting weights strong, like the way they are formed and come together); the voice has life . . . but I'm just not feeling it. Honestly, it has just fantastic structure and a great base--but I dislike the way that Kogler dealt with it. It is similar Trenton Lee Stewart's *The Mysterious Benedict Society* in this way; they both were



great ideas, and could have been amazing . . . but, sadly, it did not meet its potential--no where near.

Truly, the characters were just great though. Fern was surprisingly strong throughout the entire novel, and very occasionally came near her breaking point. Sam, her twin, was a great kid, and a sturdy shoulder to lean on. Mrs. McAlister was definitely not without a back bone. Mr. Bing was like the perfect grandfatherly image--despite the fact that he probably isn't a grandfather. But . . . it just doesn't go. The novel, i mean. It clearly could have come together wonderfully--but it does not.

The main reason for this is that it is just . . . slow. Even if it was at an exciting part, it was STILL slow. Achingly slow. I cannot pinpoint it exactly, but there was something that kept me from being sucked in completely. It was like doing to Hokie-Pokie; one minute my arm would be in, the next minute my leg would be in--but i'd never be in all the way. No, actually, that's not true. I was completely sucked in at one point--that point being fairly close to the end of the novel, which i suppose makes it even MORE like doing to Hokie-Pokie.

Despite this, i admired Kogler's writing style. Not so much her style, actually, but her voice. (no, not her literal VOICE. i mean her voice on paper) Kogler's words were all very clear, and so were their meanings. It was not hard to follow, but the voice was most definitely one of a kind.

Overall, voice/plot/character-wise, i give it 5 stars, but everything else-wise, i give it 2 stars. Frankly, i think this book could have been so much better.

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## Jessica says

Check other reviews at <http://bathtubreader.blogspot.com/>

2.5 stars

A victim of too many ideas, the wrong audience, and itself. This book isn't horrible, I've read worse and the writing was actually pretty good. Kogler actually turns a phrase pretty well and does a good job with pace and creating likable characters. Fern, Sam, and their mother were great characters who made me smile and sometimes feel bad for them. In many ways they did their jobs well and I'm almost tempted to read the next book just to read about more about them - almost.

While the book moves well and the writing is decent, the story is silly and the kids don't act their age. Fern and Sam are in middle school yet most of the time act like they are in high school. There are also things they put together that most people won't connect yet they do at the crazy age of 12. A year ago I spent weeks with over 200 middle schoolers and I can tell Fern and Sam missed the mark. They were too well behaved, too mature (they had essentially no angst), too calm about crazy things happening, and too steadfast to things they should have questioned. That said, they were great characters and would have been close to perfect if they were a few years older and questioned things with more passion.

The story started off ok. An outcast girl who comes into powers and even a friend. Ok, yeah, nothing new but it's a trope I enjoy. Then it turns out she's a vampire. Once again, ok, the book is from 2008 and the vampire kids were in full swing. Plus, I still enjoy vampire stories, even if I'm the only one left. Then the Greek mythology starts to take hold and the eyebrows came together in a confused scowl. The Greek Gods were actually vampires? Um, no, this doesn't work for me. The mash up of Greek mythology and vampire lore didn't work. The random Greek creatures showing up and having bizarre jobs, living in zoos, and all the

other randomness worked even less.

Moving past the strange Greek roots, the division of vampire society into the good, non-blood drinking Rollens and the evil, blood-drinking Blouts didn't work for me either. We're never given enough information about the Blouts. Why is it such a big deal that they drink blood? Do they kill every time they drink from someone? Other than disagreeing with the Rollens, why are they bad? We're given some pithy story about Blouts not wanting to live with "Normals" or humans but it's not really clear what the deal is with these vampires. In the end, I don't really care about either group and think Fern makes a good move staying with her "normal" family.

This is book one in what I guess was going to be a series that didn't pan out because there is a second book and this book doesn't give us as much closer as one might like for Fern. There are a number of loose ends and dangling story lines that want to be books. I read some reviews of the second book and it sounds like things only get more unraveled and leave the reader hanging with even less information than the first book. Kogler's website looks as though she's not writing seriously anymore and the last book she published had nothing to do with the Otherworldlies. She's not a bad writer and with some practice could be good fun but it doesn't look like she's in it for the long run.

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