



A Question of Ghosts

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Becca Healy always believed she understood the shameful circumstances of her mother's death—until the night her mother's spirit whispers a simple message out of the static of a radio: "Not true." Becca turns to the terse Dr. Joanne Call, an expert in Electronic Voice Phenomenon—ghost voices—to unravel the mystery of this decades-old tragedy. Joanne can coax messages out of the silence of the grave, but coping with this feisty, emotional Healy person might be completely beyond her. Together, Becca and Jo must tackle childhood grief, a serial killer, Xena withdrawal, and a growing attraction between the two most mismatched women in Seattle.

A Question of Ghosts Details

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MJS says

I've enjoyed all three of Culpepper present day stories (I haven't read her Tristaine series) and while I'm not usually a fan of the paranormal I do like the way Culpepper incorporates these aspects into her stories. This book leaned more on the paranormal than Fireside (my favourite so far) but the mystery was intriguing and the pacing such that it flowed nicely.

I enjoyed the characters, both main and supporting but my only criticism would be that some didn't seem fleshed out enough. We learnt plenty about Becca as the story primarily focused on her, and as such I got to the end without a good handle on Jo. Also a little more back-story on Becca's two best friends would have been nice. And though the two main characters spent a lot of time together, they didn't really discuss anything much of a personal nature, I guess we're to believe they knew enough of each others character to fall in love, without needing to know anything of substance. Culpepper seemed to find the balance between the romance and the paranormal a bit better in River Walker though.

Still the mystery and the subsequent investigation were more than enough to keep me going, the romance between Becca and Jo seemed largely a side plot and I enjoyed it as such. I prefer Fireside and River Walker, but this one is worth a read as well.

Pin says

Wow! Great fun to read this one! This is my first Culpepper, but it certainly will not be the last. A perfect blend of mystery, paranormal and romance with a nice dose of humor. An excellent book that goes on my re-read list.

Chris Paynter says

I really admire Culpepper's writing, especially her storytelling abilities to hook you and take you through the duration of the novel. I've read two of her other novels, the latest being her Lambda-winning "River Walker." "A Question of Ghosts" is along the same lines as "River Walker." Her character development is amazing. She's not afraid to give her characters flaws, which to me makes you even more invested in their lives. I highly recommend this book and can't wait for her next release!

Juushika says

When Becca hears her dead mother's voice, she reaches out for help from an expert in the supernatural. I admire this on paper--the protagonists have a genuine chemistry, and I love that they're older, with storied, atypical backgrounds and identities; the cast is diverse, the Seattle setting convincing, and it has a fun, kind energy. But in practice, this never worked for me. The social elements are too delineated--characters disclosing information unnaturally, bonding too readily--and I don't buy the final reveal at all; I couldn't grow invested. And this lacks atmosphere, despite the potential for it (particularly in the cover image and the statue's role in the book). The supernatural feels too commonplace, foregoing tiresome disbelief but also

losing tension and atmosphere. I tried to like this, but it probably just wasn't the book for me.

Baxter Trautman says

I liked it, as the three stars say, and to be honest I had huge expectations after River Walker.

Culpepper's writing is satisfying on all levels - professional editing, believable characters, a spookily fascinating EVP (Electronic Voice Phenomena) storyline, and a plot with more red herrings than a North Atlantic fishing fleet. The only thing lacking for me, was that elusive, ineffable quality of heart: the story felt more genre-driven than soul-inspired, but lesfic fans will not be disappointed in A Question of Ghosts.

D. Leigh says

If you liked Cate's Lambda winning "River Walker," you'll LOVE "A Question of Ghosts." The two main characters are beautifully developed, the dialog is brisk and the writing crisp. Don't miss this one. It's one of those that when you are finished, you close the book and say, "Wow."

Cab says

I've read some mixed reviews on this book but I thoroughly enjoyed it. I have no idea if the author intended the first few chapters to be as funny in spots as they were but there were definitely a few places where I was laughing so hard I had tears in my eyes. My absolute favorite scene was the Ghost yelling "Becca Run!!" and the description of the events afterward. I'm still giggling at the visual that was created for me.

I liked the interaction between Becca and Jo and the development of both characters. It's obvious in the 1st introduction of Jo that she does not do people or emotions well at all, but that's part of what makes her endearing. I like the fact that Becca and Jo seem to have an inherent ability to figure each other out and can interact in a manner that shows acceptance for each others' quirks.

I liked it, I liked the story, and I liked the mystery as well. It was a good book.

Erin says

I was a little hesitant to read A Question of Ghosts simply because I am a scaredy cat when it comes to, well, anything scary. Knowing what an excellent story teller Cate Culpepper is, I knew this story would not disappoint in character development as well as having a captivating story line. I was not disappointed in getting scared, in loving the characters dynamic personalities, and getting caught up in the story and wanting to know who did it already! Ms. Culpepper did an excellent job of laying down the clues but keeping the reader guessing until the very end. The characters of Jo and Becca left me wanting to see more of them in future work as Ms. Culpepper gave the reader just enough of their relationship without detracting from the true story but knowing the connection that they made was real. My recommendation- read it during the day when there is still light!

Jem says

A sensitive love story between a spirited, nurturing social worker with a traumatic past and a cold, socially-challenged scientist she hires to help her decipher a 'ghostly' message from her late mother.

There is so much more to it than meets the eye, however, as their quest digs deeper and gets more dangerous as the mystery intensifies.

I love the perfect juxtaposition of romance developing alongside the mystery. The characters also develop nicely as they interact with one another. The author treats the scientist Jo's 'disability' with respect and nuance. I find it quite endearing how she tries to interpret people's facial expressions scientifically. And she's forever watching out for Becca and learning how to socially interact along the way.

I'm not a Xena fan, but the references to the show, its themes and props and how the characters bond over them are an excellent use of pop culture to further the story.

My only gripe has to do with the ending. The romantic in me wishes for an extra chapter of Becca 101. Also I didn't quite appreciate the villain's motives--they seem too contrived. I know truth is often stranger than fiction, but this is supposed to be fiction.

Jess says

Once I read the synopsis for this book, I knew it had to be bumped up on my to-read list. I love books that deal with "real world" paranormal subjects like ghost hunting and EVP, and I love when the true believer and the skeptic have to work together to solve a mystery. In this book, we get two believers who approach a case from two angle--Jo is a professional who seeks proof, and Becca is a woman trying to solve the mysteries of her parents' deaths when she was only five.

The mystery plot was awesome in this. It kept me guessing constantly, kept me questioning each characters' intentions as Becca and Jo brought up all the old skeletons in everyone's closets. Even the parts of the book that leaned towards contemporary romance were great--Becca's "clan" of close friends felt like coming home, and all the amazing *Xena* references sent my little gay heart soaring. It made me incredibly invested in Becca's well-being, her relationship with Jo, and the root of all of her childhood horrors.

I like that the characters feel very *real* in this. They're flawed and broken and beautiful together. Becca's phobia, PTSD, and status as a recovering addict don't make her any less of an adorable dork who "eats roughly four pounds of chocolate per day" (Jo's words, not mine). She has a wicked sense of laid-back humor and is great in crisis, making her the kind of gal I'd want in my corner. Jo, on the other hand, was a little less fully-fleshed than Becca, but still very enjoyable. I thought she was autistic from the first time we met her, but the story never reveals any kind of diagnosis, just that she has difficulty with social cues and situations.

She's smart and capable and completely in over her head as she falls for Becca, and I love that she's a sexy butch who doesn't fall into many of the butch stereotypes still prevalent in lesfic (I love a leather jacket and motorcycle as much as the next girl, but sometimes a dorky scholar butch is just my cup of tea). Even the minor characters, like Rachel Perry or Luther Emerson, are shown to be three-dimensional people even as they battle illnesses that come with old age. It's a small detail, but it's one that I enjoyed.

I use the "paranormal" tag very loosely for this, since this book is only paranormal in that (view spoiler). I think some readers won't like that aspect (either because they're skeptics or they want *more* of it, but it really worked for me in a subdued horror-story kind of way.

This was a relatively short book with a succinct plot, great characters, and a good mystery. The romance won't work for everyone (and it is kept very PG), and some might be put off by the paranormal-lite aspects, but I thought it was a great read.

Immy says

An entertaining book, with interesting characters. Lots of ladies loving ladies - which is always good - but also an intriguing storyline revolving around the mystery of ghosts, and our ability to communicate with them (and them with us). Was a little disappointed about the lack of science and explanations about the ghosts, but other than that the book gave me what I was looking for. Not going to lie, a large part of why I read this book was for the Xena references, and I was pleasantly surprised at the amount of mentions the show got! I didn't give the book a higher rating because some of the time it seemed a little far-fetched, and sometimes it read a little like fanfiction, so when comparing it to other books I've read it wasn't the best. Still a fun read! Just wasn't always believable (and not because of the ghosts). Nothing wrong with it though, and would recommend for those looking for a pleasant gay ghost story.

Emanuela ~plastic duck~ says

I must confess that one night I had to stop reading this story and start something else because I felt the creepiness surround me. The book never reaches the peaks of horror books, because the ghost is pretty gentle and not harmful toward one of the protagonists, but I felt impressed. I think it was especially because Becca, the character who was hearing the voice, was living with such a stress that it transferred to me. The tone of the whole story is very funny at times, though, so I can't classify it as a dark read.

Becca was five when her parents died: her mother allegedly killed his husband and then committed suicide. The problem is that Becca's mother has reached out to her through radio equipment to let her know that what Becca knows isn't true. Becca has had a problem of addiction, but she's a sunny woman, fiercely loved and protected by her friends. She decides to ask for help to Joanne, who's an expert in otherworldly voice phenomena. I think Joanne is a very interesting character. It's not clearly explained what her condition is, but basically she has difficulties in social interaction, it's as if she can't emotionally connect with the feelings of the people around her, and she has learned to read the expressions of people constantly to be able to catch the nuances that let her interpret the behavior of others.

In their investigation Becca and Joanne move something that has been buried for a long time and day after day they receive threats or signs that they should desist from it. At the same time, they get closer and they literally learn to interact with each other. Becca gives Joanne a clan of friends and connections that she has never had in her life, Joanne gives Becca a rock to hold on too. They are both flawed and their friendship

makes them heal.

The story was very entertaining, with some humor, and I was surprised at the end.

Natsu says

[This developed into a friendship Jo didn't want to acknowledge. In the process of helping Becca find the truth about the night her pare

Baz M says

This strays very much from my usual genres but I'm pleasantly surprised. I thought this book would be much more about the supernatural and the processes involved in communicating with the other side. While particular scenes do focus on it and it is the general theme of the book, it isn't the focus. I did finish it in a day however, which speaks volumes for its readability.

Jess Faraday says

A well-written, well-paced, all-around excellent read. My review here:
<http://jessfaraday.com/2012/06/25/mor...>
