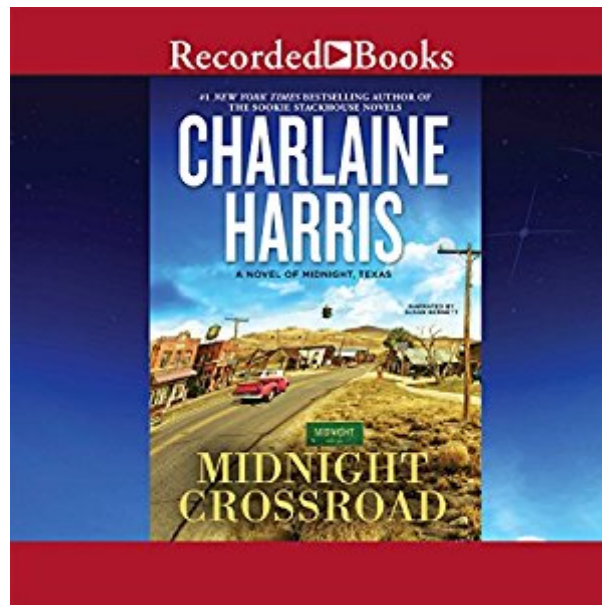


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Midnight Crossroad: A Novel Of Midnight Texas



Synopsis

First in a new trilogy From Charlene Harris, the best-selling author who created Sookie Stackhouse and her world of Bon Temps, Louisiana, comes a darker locale - populated by more strangers than friends. But then, that's how the locals prefer it. Welcome to Midnight, Texas, a town with many boarded-up windows and few full-time inhabitants, located at the crossing of Witch Light Road and Davy Road. It's a pretty standard dried-up western town. There's a pawnshop (someone lives in the basement and is seen only at night). There's a diner (people who are just passing through tend not to linger). And there's new resident, Manfred Bernardo, who thinks he's found the perfect place to work in private (and who has secrets of his own). Stop at the one traffic light in town, and everything looks normal. Stay awhile, and learn the truth....

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Please know now that I've read Mz Harris's books since high school. I love mysteries and strong plots, and usually, Harris's writing has never let me down. Until now. I'm not going to rip into the woman but I will say this is the first book I've read of hers where I was bored reading it. Worse than hating it, I didn't care about any of the characters or their problems. I think it was because all the characters had secrets, so many secrets, that I wasn't able to identify with any of the characters. When the mystery was solved and the killer revealed, I still couldn't care. I liked Figi well enough, but everybody (the characters) guarded their back stories so well that it made them all dull. When Harris let me know interesting bits about her Midnight cast, it was too little too late. Sad to say, I

didn't enjoy reading this book; I dredged through it. Ignore or believe me -your choice. I'm so sorry Mz Harris.

I've always liked Charlaine Harris's writing, up until about the last 2-3 Sookie Stackhouse books. Then I felt she descended into a pattern of description of clothing and food, and away from the characters themselves, which made for not very interesting reading. Still, I was willing to give her new series a try because I was hoping it would be fresh and exciting. I really shouldn't have bothered. The story is set in Midnight, Texas, and features the strangest group of people as very odd friends. There's young Manfred, new in town, and possibly psychic; there's Fiji, a young witch who is in love with Bobo, who owns the pawn shop. There's Lemuel, a vampire, and his often-missing girlfriend, Olivia; there's the Rev, a man of God who doesn't speak much. I could go on and on, each one more oddly named than the rest, and none of them particularly endearing. The story essentially revolves around getting to know the group and the disappearance of Bobo's girlfriend, Aubrey, whose body turns up almost halfway through. Not that I cared, really; no one is the sort you'd cheer for and the "gang" who is behind many of the attacks seems to be not quite as smart as a gang should be. I kept reading, hoping I'd finally get interested, and then mostly so I could write this review. What made the characters quirky and fun in the Sookie books is totally lacking in this book; there's just no spark. I may have been engaged a time or two, but overall, I just couldn't have cared less. I won't be looking for the next one.

Do not waste your money or time. The Charlaine Harris we all love and expect to read did not write this book. Too many boring characters, too, too much description of food eaten, cloths, houses, and roads to be interesting. Who cares how the roast beef tasted or looked or what came with it as a side item? No real resolution of weak plot or character interaction. Hard to get into the first 100 pages-hard to get through this NO-action filled, No-interesting characters and No-substantial plot. The killer was brought into the story in the get any hints previously last 100-150 pages with NO development of character at all and we did not get any tidbits about him as a killer at all until the last part of the book. Ms Harris seems to have lost her knack for writing great characters, great plots and keeping the reader interested in the book. All she does not is write lots of descriptions of inanimate items just to fill pages and get paid. I will no longer buy her boring books if this what she has to offer.

I was hugely disappointed in this new book. It is the first of the series, with Manfred, the psychic friend of Harper Connelly as the star carryover from previous books. (Though, to be fair, Lily Bard

from the Shakespeare books gets a mention too.) I so looked forward to this. I absolutely have loved every one of Charlaine Harris's books--I'm pretty sure I've read all her published novels, even the very early ones. And the Harper Connelly series (GRAVE SIGHT, etc.) is my absolute favorite. I liked Manfred in that series, the young man who worked with and looked after his grandmother. Both made a living as psychics, with Manfred having more actual talent than his grandmother, but both having actual flashes of psychic skills. But...my disappointment level is huge with this opening book of the new Midnight Texas series. First, the writing is very flat. This is a little town in West Texas out in the middle of nowhere, with maybe a couple hundred total residents, most of whom live in outlying ranches. The people living in the town are a group of a dozen or so. Of this cadre of characters, all of them appear to have odd back stories. One is a vampire. The businesses these people run appear to have no likelihood of ever drawing a single customer--who would go there to buy anything???--yet they all scratch out an acceptable living. Harris does so many character POV switches that we never really get to know any of the characters very well. She doesn't head-hop--the POV switches are clearly done. But everything is very shallow and...well...flat. Even worse. This is a mystery series, right? Well, in my Kindle edition, I was 80% of the way through the book before a dead body appeared! NOTHING HAPPENS in this story. There's no real conflict. There's no real story problem that drives the story from start to end. WORST OF ALL: No one has any real, knowable motivation for anything except the most superficial kind (It's the end of the worst of the summer heat, so let's do a community picnic to celebrate). In particular, why are all these people in this nowhere place? Who knows??? Okay, I can accept the vampire's motivation for staying there--he's been there 100+ years. Maybe he's attached to home ground. But nearly everyone else--most especially the "lead" characters Fiji and Manfred (the ones whose POV we're in most often)--have ZERO apparent motivation for moving to or staying in this nowhere place of Midnight, Texas. We never do learn why Manfred (last seen in the Harper Connelly books somewhere in NC or Tennessee...someplace like that) has chosen Midnight as his new place to be. There's not even a hint of how he even found it on the map, much less why he moved there. I'll grant that the motivation of one of the characters for living there is key to solving the question of who did in the dead body, but still...And, given that this is a mystery...nothing whatsoever surprised me in this story. Not the murderer. Not the "big reveal secret" at the end (no, I won't tell you what it is. You'll probably figure it out way early like I did anyway.) There is no mystery here. So...while the place has some level of intrigue (there is that vamp, and, apparently, other less-than-normal characters. And Fiji, of course, is a working witch), the characters themselves do not. Where is Sookie's quirky humor and desperate desire to be normal? (No one in Midnight appears to have a

sense of humor.) Where is Harper Connelly's drive to find her missing sister? No one has any push to accomplish anything. There is no story problem driving the story. There is virtually no conflict anywhere in the book, except a minimal amount at the end. There is no real mystery to anything. The POV switches seem designed to prevent the reader from getting close to the characters and provide a lazy way to "tell" readers what's going on rather than "showing" them. This is flat, simplistic writing. I'm surprised the editors didn't call Harris on this and insist that it be done better. Or that her agent didn't tell her it wasn't ready for publication yet. SOMEONE should have said, this is a good start, now go back and make it your usual excellent writing. A HUGE disappointment from a beloved author.

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