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# Devilish

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Johnson, Maureen. *Devilish*. Razorbill, 2006. ISBN 9781595140609. \$16.99. 263 p.

Reviewer: Rachel Wadham

Reading Level: Young adult

Rating: Outstanding

Genre: Fantasy fiction;

Subject: Devils--Fiction; Books--Reviews;

Everyone knows that high school is hell, but at St. Teresa's Preparatory School for Girls in Providence, Rhode Island it most literally is. When senior Jane Jarvis's best friend Allison starts acting oddly, she soon discovers that Ally has sold her soul to junior devil Lanalee in exchange for popularity. It is now up to Jane to save her, by taking her place. But contracts with the devil are never that simple and Jane must survive giant hailstorms and textbook pyrotechnics to save her school and her soul. The typical quest for popularity in high school is turned on its head in this extraordinary remix of the German tale of Faust. With a story that could really strain the bounds of credibility, Johnson weaves things so tightly that all the plot twists become believable. As with Johnson's realistic works (*13 Little Blue Envelopes* and *The Key to the Golden Firebird*), her strong point is her exceptional characters. From Jane's friends and family, to the cadre of devils, to the good demon hunter—the characters each fill their places well and add to the overall believability of the book.

Connections to other works abound with this novel—from the legend of Faust to modern chick lit fantasy such as Meg Cabot's Mediator series, savvy teachers and librarians will find lots of ways to connect this work to a larger context. The only negative for this rapidly paced and very funny novel comes at the end where things are tied up a little too fast. Readers must pay close attention to understand the trick Jane uses to finally break the devil's contract. The blending of modern horror elements and legend with a typical teen girl novel plot, balanced on the shoulders of outstanding characters, makes *Devilish* a very unique and exciting novel that will definitely have high appeal.