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The Mediator #1: Shadowland

Whitney Troxel

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Book Review

Title: The Mediator #1: Shadowland

Author: Meg Cabot

Reviewer: Whitney Troxel

Publisher: HarperTeen

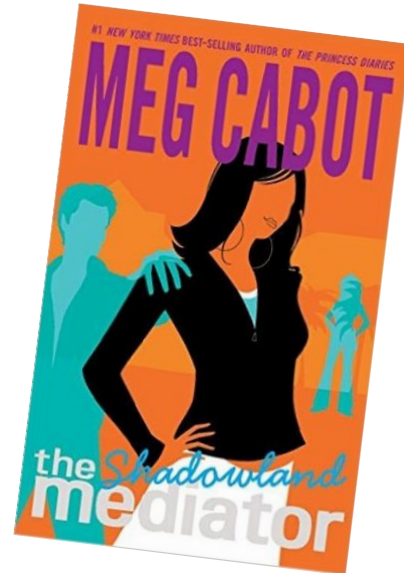
Publication Year: 2004

ISBN: 9780060725112

Number of Pages: 287

Interest Level: Young Adult

Rating: Outstanding



Review

Susannah Simon, or Suze to everyone but a select few, is not your average teenage girl. She's a mediator, which means she can see and speak to ghosts. However, Suze hopes moving across the country to live with her new step-family could be the start of a new, ghost-free life. That hope quickly disappears when she walks into her new home and discovers Jesse, the unfairly attractive 150-year-old ghost haunting her room. Things get even worse when Suze meets Heather, a vengeful ghost of a former student at her school. Ignoring the advice of Father Dominic, another mediator and the principal of the Catholic school Suze and her step-brothers attend, Suze decides to talk to Heather one-on-one. She quickly realizes Heather is determined to kill her ex-boyfriend, Bryce, and anyone else who gets in her way, including Suze. Heather would have succeeded too if Jesse hadn't come to Suze's aid. After Father Dominic gets injured saving Bryce's life, Suze decides it time for drastic measures. Suze performs an exorcism and banishes Heather to the next life.

Meg Cabot is an extraordinary author. While the plot of Shadowland is dynamic and fast passed, the real strength is in the characters. Every character realistic, complex, and therefore timeless. Shadowland was originally published in 2000, but is just as relevant today as it was then. The book is only dated by Suze needing to use a pay phone to call her mother, and her asking if the school had a computer with Internet access. Other than that, Susannah Simon remains just as relatable today as when she was first written. She is strong willed and independent, but also feminine. There is something about her personality that will relate to almost any young girl. Told from first person, the reader gets to know Suze the best. However, you get a sense that all the characters that interact with Suze have the same depth she does. As the first book in a series of six, Shadowland does an excellent job of establishing characters and setting while remaining exciting and engaging.

*Contains mild to moderate language.