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# Ghost Gifts



## **Synopsis**

All Aubrey Ellis wants is a normal life, one that doesn't include desperate pleas from the dead. Her remarkable gift may help others rest in peace, but it also made for an unsettling childhood and destroyed her marriage. Finally content as the real estate writer for a local newspaper, Aubrey keeps her extraordinary ability hidden - until she is unexpectedly assigned the story of a decades-old murder. Rocked by the discovery of a young woman's skeletal remains, the New England town of Surrey wants answers. Hard-nosed investigative reporter Levi St John is determined to get them. Aubrey has no choice but to get involved, even at the terrifying risk of stirring spirits connected to a dead woman's demise and piquing her new reporting partner's suspicions. As Aubrey and Levi delve further into the mystery, secrets are revealed and passion ignites. It seems that Aubrey's ghost gifts are poised to deliver everything but a normal life.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

I always look forward to the Kindle First picks of the month because I enjoy branching out of my normal preferred genres of contemporary romance, historical fiction, and New Adult fiction. I was drawn to this book because it appeared to be a combination of several genres (mystery/suspense, romance, and paranormal) and I was intrigued by the story line. Ghost Gifts is the first book I've read by Laura Spinella and I have to say, for the most part, I enjoyed it! This book intrigued me enough to keep reading and offered enough twists and turns and heart-pounding anticipation that I couldn't put it down. This book also switches back and forth between present day and 20 years

prior, to the time when Aubrey Ellis, the protagonist, is a 13-year-old girl, and where it all started. 33-year-old Aubrey Ellis is a home portrait features editor at the Surrey City Press in Surrey, Massachusetts. Basically she works with real estate agents to write pieces on homes to try to help sell them. When a new discovery uncovers a murder committed twenty years ago, she is assigned to help Levi St John, the city desk editor of the Hartford Standard Speaker, with the story because she has a lot of contacts in the community and knows the town well. The other talent she possesses is one only her grandmother, Charley, knows about. Aubrey is, in essence, a medium, and can talk with the deceased as well as receive signs from them. Aubrey keeps a box of "ghost gifts," mementos from ghosts she has spoken with in the past and they often help her recall memories. This box comes in handy throughout the book. She has tried to lead a normal life by working as a reporter but it seems as though her talents are going to be utilized in the latest development in the decades-old murder of Missy Flannigan. Aubrey and Levi spend a lot of time together and the whole time, Aubrey has to decide what to do about her disintegrating marriage to her husband Owen. I really enjoyed the unique combination of romance, encounters with the paranormal, and solving the murder mystery. I typically avoid reading murder mysteries but this one really wasn't gory and gruesome so I was able to enjoy it. There is nothing particularly scary about it; it's more just suspenseful in the fact that the chapters end with a new piece of news that kept me turning pages. I often noticed parts of the book dragged on with so many details, only to end on a brand new piece of information that flared my excitement again. Obviously it was enough to keep me going and the book really got going at the end. I never would have imagined the ending to turn out the way it did and I like how all of the puzzle pieces came together. I definitely recommend reading this book if you are like me and feel like reading a book that doesn't fit into one specific genre, but rather multiple genres that create a very unique and intriguing story. Just know that the story can drag on but keep reading because it continues to get better!

I really wanted to like this book and in places I succeed, but not often enough to give it a high rating. Aubrey is a small town reporter who has been cursed with the ability to interact with ghosts. A twenty year old body is discovered and she must work with coldly rational fellow reporter on the case. I can think of three current series with similar formulas. Nothing wrong with formula, but it must be well done. In this case choices are made by the author that just don't work. First, she tells large chunks of the mystery in first person narrative by the victim twenty years ago. It kills the mystery yet does not inform the investigators. Secondly, the character of Aubrey is all over the place. She goes from immature, emotional mess to confident psychic woman back to emotional

mess. She is difficult to connect with. Finally, for much of the book the mystery takes a back seat to Aubrey's emotional issues. The result is a mismatched collection of plot devices that just don't work well together. The fairytale ending also seems to come out of nowhere. Needs to decide what it wants to be. Mystery, YA, romance or show a better ability to blend it all together.

The summary of this book sounded interesting, I read thirty percent before I skimmed to the end. The first chapter was good, a thirteen year old dealing with communicating with the dead. Then we have an adult Aubrey still talking to the dead while trying to hide her ability from everyone else. My problem with the book is the main character. I didn't like or dislike her, she just seemed rather bland. I also thought the book was a little too wordy. I realize I am at odds with all of the five star reviews, but this is my honest opinion.

Ghost gifts was my kindle first pick this month, and I am really glad I picked it. My rating is between a four and five, so ultimately I just allowed the fact that I read this book from 9 this morning until now, enjoying most of it, and saying "wow, I'm glad that was my pick." when I was done, to guide the number up to five instead of down to four. Aubrey Ellis a great character, we get to see her development from hating her gift to being able to use it. She has made a fairly happy life for herself, working the real estate column in a small local newspaper and helping ghosts get their messages out. Her life is disrupted when bones are found in a house from a 20 year old murder mystery, and she is assigned to work the case with a visiting hot shot reporter. The last thing Aubrey wants to do is work on a murder mystery. Most of the book worked really well. This was an interesting mystery, a fun romance, and ghosts. It takes a deft hand to weave all the elements together. The flashbacks give a lot of character development to the dead girl, Missy, and are handled well. If there were one thing that brought it down for me a little was, what I thought, the unnecessary distraction of the soon to be ex. Having her simply divorced and done with it would have worked just as well, for me it added nothing to the story. However, that small issue aside this was a really good read. While the story line wrapped up, I would love to see this as a series and would buy the next one.

Ghost Gifts is emotionally satisfying and deliciously spooky. I could not put it down. Aubrey, a reporter in the real estate section of the paper, has the dubious gift of seeing ghosts and sometimes she sees things that are extremely disturbing. An unsolved murder mystery comes up and Aubrey thinks she might have some answers but is also terrified about what she might find and what it might mean to the small town of Surrey. Spinella weaves in a romantic interest that challenges Aubrey in

ways she never expected Clear your calendar before you sit down with this book because you will get lost in the intricate and layered narrative. This novel is one-of-a-kind and wickedly good.

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