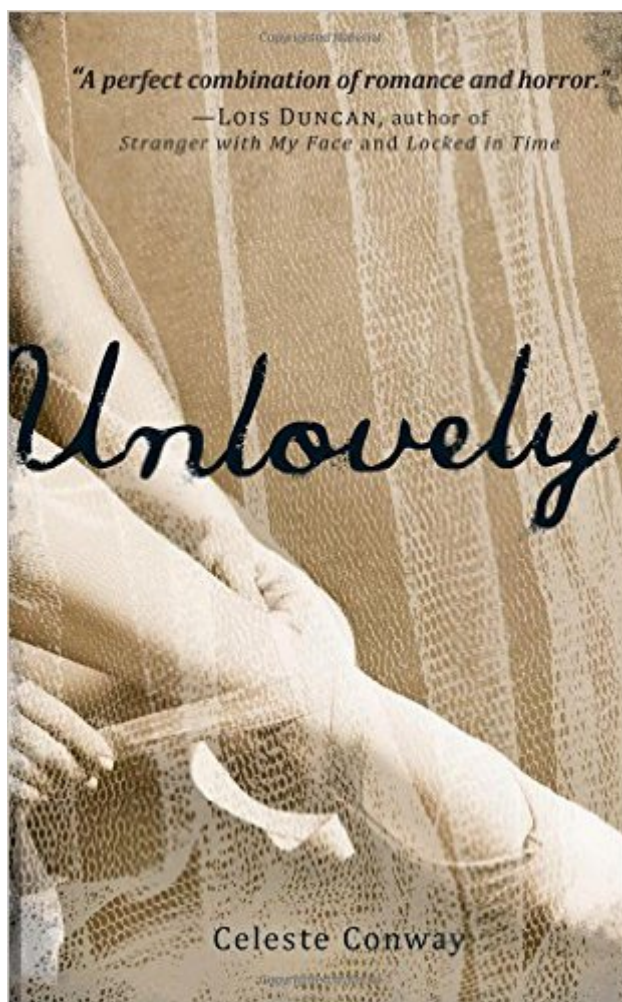


The book was found

Unlovely



Synopsis

They look so sweet and beautiful...but what is the dark, unlovely truth? Harley's a college guy with a brain in his head. Those old tales about the ballet school and the evils hidden within its walls are for the town's fools and gossips. Then Cassandra, one of the dancers, whirls into his life. Harley is at first enchanted. Then he's doubtful. And then he's terrified. But it's already too late.

Book Information

Hardcover: 254 pages

Publisher: Merit Press (January 2, 2015)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1440582793

ISBN-13: 978-1440582790

Product Dimensions: 5.5 x 0.9 x 8.4 inches

Shipping Weight: 13.6 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 3.7 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (12 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #798,297 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #22 in [Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Religious > Christian > Mysteries & Thrillers](#) #62 in [Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Performing Arts > Dance](#) #2266 in [Books > Teens > Mysteries & Thrillers > Mystery & Detective](#)

Customer Reviews

All I knew about this book was what I gleaned from the cover: it was about ballet, and somehow, love and horror were involved. As the story opens, I had the distinct feeling that it was taking place sometime in the 1950s. When the main character spoke, the descriptions of the girls from the ballet school, the feel of the town - all of it seemed to be from a different era. Imagine my surprise when either an f-bomb or the mention of a cell phone was introduced (I don't recall which). Shocked the senses, to say the least. Well, OK. We are absolutely in modern times. But still, there was something about it that reminded me of books from a bygone era. Harley is home for the summer from college. He is the only of his friend group who left to go. He was supposed to leave this small town along with his then-girlfriend, Mairin. Mairin was always full of adventure, fun and a thirst for travel, but somehow her mother, a bitter and unhappy woman, guilted her into staying. Harley waited for Mairin to come to her senses, but when he returned she had already taken up with Smits, a local boy not known for his smarts, drive or temperance. And by then, Mairin was pregnant. Always fascinated by the line of beautiful ballet girls that glided into town every summer, Harley noticed a

new face among them. A beautiful girl who hadn't gotten that snobby, cold look yet that the others had mastered. And when fate caused them to cross paths during a horrible storm, he was totally smitten. His friends certainly weren't happy, though; there was always a divide between those at the ballet school who spent the rest of the year in New York City, and the townies, especially after local boy Teddy Flynn was found dead at the base of a tower on the ballet school's property. No one who knew him believed that he had been drunk and fallen out the window, as was recorded as the official cause of death. But Harley is totally taken with Cassandra, and though he knows that something bad happened between her and her last boyfriend, he knows he would never do anything to hurt her. In fact, that's how all of the girls from the ballet school feel. But when Cassandra gets the role of Giselle and starts spending almost all of her time at the school, he starts to hear stories about other boys who stood in the way of a dancer's career and suffered because of it. Cassandra then becomes the pet of the guest ballet teacher, a woman who had a brief relationship with Harley's own father - and had tried to stab him. There are strange things happening up at the school, to say the least. But he can't stay away from Cassandra. This story felt long and languid; like I was lying in a hammock, and a Southerner with a slow drawl was reading it out loud to me while I napped. The cursing, to be honest, felt weirdly out of place. And the action was there, but it felt like one of those dreams where you are running in place and trying to get somewhere but you have cinder blocks on your feet and you are in a pool full of Jell-O. This story needed to have more snap, like the sails on Harley's boat; it needed to skim more lightly during the in-between parts and linger over the drama. The ending was a little lackluster, and even the title I found to be passive. For me, this pas de deux is more pas de dull. *Unlovely* by Celeste Conway was published January 2, 2015, by Merit Press. A free copy of this book was given to Ink and Page in return for an honest review. Big thanks to the Publisher for their generosity. Rating: 2.5 Genre: Young Adult Fiction Contemporary Thriller Ages: 12 and up

I really enjoyed this book. I've read other books by Ms. Conway and originally bought this for my cousin as a gift. I decided to read it before sending it and finished the book in one day. The characters and the story captured my attention and my heart. From the small seaside town to the mysteries hiding in the ballet school up on the hill, Ms. Conway paints memorable scenes filled with characters we might have known. I think the story would appeal to a broad population of readers of all ages and can see it one day becoming a screenplay. Highly recommended.

I loved the idea of *Unlovely*. A romance gone horribly wrong? Sign me up (you know how much I

love something different). Unfortunately, it didn't live up to my expectations. The story is about a young man (named Harley of all things) who returns to his small town (renowned for a prestigious dance school) after his first year at college. Of course, going out into the wider world, he doesn't quite fit in on the way back. But what struck me as odd is that after having spent most of his life in the shadow of this dance school, it's only after he's left and come back that he truly notices the students at the school. After years of being apart (and a bit beneath) these dancers, he suddenly manages to date one, and become (kinda) friends with another. I just didn't buy it. The romance between Harley and said dancer (Cassandra) just didn't ring true. But I guess that was kinda the point. He's supposed to be enchanted by her. I did feel the true love between him and his high school sweetheart (who strangely gets pregnant by and marries another guy). There's also this weird evil woman who runs the whole nastiness part of the story and the bizarre relationship with Harley's dad. It just didn't make a whole lot of sense to me. I think what most disappointed me was the supposed horror aspect of the story. I was expecting monsters or gruesome murders. Something like that. But the reality of the story was much more benign. I wouldn't have classified it as horror. More like a thriller. Maybe then I'd have liked it more, if it had matched up more closely with my expectations. Then again, I probably wouldn't have requested it had the blurb been less sensational. This review originally appeared here: <http://www.leilareads.com/unlovely-by-celeste-conway/> I received a copy of *Unlovely* from Edelweiss in exchange for an honest review.

This author has written a captivating thriller and a beautiful love story. I felt that I knew the characters, so well developed were each of the individuals in the story, some of whom I'd want to know and others, I'm glad I don't. This makes me want to seek out other works by Ms. Conway. She is a gifted writer who knows how to spin a great yarn. I'm going to have to read this one again 'cause like a great meal, this book is one to savor.

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