



Illuminating Gracie

Lisa C. Temple

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As an old woman's lifeless body lies on a cold stone floor, her soul stands before an angel who offers her a miraculous opportunity: the chance to do it all again. But that is easier said than done. In order to change the path her life has taken, she must put aside years of self-loathing and pain, so she can help the young girl she once was become the woman she should have been.

At 17 years old, Grace Bennett is a bitter young woman. Though blessed with a loving family, looks and brains to spare, she hides her light under a bushel, spending most of her time in the darkness of her mind with little more than sarcasm and self-pity to keep her company.

But things are about to change for Grace. While delivering food for her family's bed and breakfast, she turns onto a desolate dirt road and drives straight into her destiny.

It's on this isolated country lane that the damaged girl meets a strangely familiar old couple and two mysterious young men. Together the group fights the demons that surround Grace, and they teach her what it means to let her light shine.

"Illuminating Gracie" is, at once, a metaphorical tale of the fight between good and evil and a spiritual saga of one girl's journey from darkness into the light. If you liked "Twilight" and "The Hunger Games," you will love the story of Gracie.

Illuminating Gracie Details

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From Reader Review Illuminating Gracie for online ebook

Quinn Barrett says

Wise Bear Media Reviews "Illuminating Gracie" by Lisa Temple -- 4 Paws!

I want to give a little background as to how I came to read this book because I'm not a huge fan of young adult fiction and my religious leanings are definitely secular. The author, Lisa Temple, had been a recent guest on a weekly podcast I host (<http://www.wisebearmedia.com/quotable...>) and I was so impressed by her humor and southern charm during our discussion that I was interested to learn more about Lisa Temple as a writer. I don't read many of my guest author's books because time is a rare commodity in independent publishing and I always have too many irons in the fire. That said, I occasionally make an exception, and "Illuminating Gracie" had a concept, book cover, and even a website that intrigued me.

Temple's writing style is much like her personality—quick, funny, and smart. There are a few places where I thought some of Gracie's vocabulary was less adolescent and more full grown women. This is a fairly common occurrence when adults write for a younger audience—a personal pet peeve of mine that drove me crazy while attempting to read "Twilight."

Although this book could easily be marketed as Christian fiction, Gracie's story has mass appeal to a much broader audience. There is a strong paranormal element to the novel's plot that some readers will view as primarily religious; but the story of good and evil has been told in so many ways and in such a variety of books over time that "Illuminating Gracie" shouldn't be pigeonholed into such a narrowly defined niche.

For a first time novelist, Temple has done a lot of things right. The characters are generally believable in the context of a paranormal story line with a nice plot twist at the end. The love triangle between Gracie, Merc, and Locke will keep true YA readers interested, but could seem a little protracted for some of us older folks. Overall, the author understands her audience, and readers will be pleased to take this journey in the fight of good versus evil.

Janet Robinson says

What a fantastic read!! I thoroughly enjoyed Illuminating Gracie!! Mystery, snarky humor, overcoming the odds...this book has it all. I will post a much more extensive review soon!!

Victoria says

Partially through the book review:

Just received this yesterday and I'm already half way through it. Lisa does an excellent job keeping the reader interested in the book, I also must say you feel you really connect with Gracie herself, as if you're almost there with her.

After finishing the whole book review:

I thoroughly enjoyed Illuminating Gracie! It kept me on the edge of my chair waiting to find out what would

happen next. I am not an avid reader, but finished it in a couple of days. I felt as I, and many girls, could relate to Gracie's young insecurities. I loved her wit and humor. I think it would make a great movie! I do hope there are more books and adventures of Gracie to come.

Note: I received this book through Goodreads First Reads!

David Chattaway says

I have to say I really didn't know what to expect when I started reading this book. I was drawn in from the onset by the intrigue and mystery of the mansion, the characters that Grace met at the start and by the sudden love triangle she found herself in. I'm a huge fan of supernatural stories and I particularly loved the way that the author described the physical change that the Angels would go through when taking on their "True" form. "Illuminating Gracie" packs in everything you could want from a great read, it has a swarm of excellently detailed characters, each with their own voice and personality. It has some shocks and twists which keep you wanting to turn the pages, but most importantly it has a powerful message. The whole story is told from Gracie's perspective, and over the course of the 300 plus pages the reader gets to witness her transformation from a person riddled with self doubt and low self-esteem to the inevitable woman she becomes. Stronger and more confident, because of the journey she's taken. I found myself thinking deeply on the message written in the last few chapters of the book. What are the outcomes of my decisions? How do they effect both others and myself? I think anytime you finish a book and not only wish there was more to read but also carry the intended message into your everyday life afterwards the author has achieved something truly profound. I'll eagerly await the sequel!

Amanda says

I found this book to be wonderfully well written. The author has a talent at drawing you in to the story with such clear descriptions of the surroundings that you feel that you are there. The way she has written the characters make them feel real to you as you read.

I loved Gracie from the moment she thought that she was just a pair of stiletto heels and a tube top from a bad b movie! Then she checked to see if her shoes were tied good in case she had to run from werewolves or zombies! Yep, that would have kept me reading if I hadn't already wanted to know what was going to happen. This was in the beginning of the book, and it just kept getting better from there.

I love that this character has her problems that I don't actually come across in most of the books she reads. I am all to familiar with OCD. I live with a house full of people that suffer from it to some degree. I recognized and connected with her immediately. While I never have the need to check under my bed multiple times or to countdown to de-stress, I have had to live with a person that goes into high gear obsessive cleaning sprees that can last for hours if not days. I have had the child that had to compulsively rearrange his furniture as soon as he was old enough to move it himself. So I started off feeling an emotional attachment to Gracie.

Plus her worries about her weight and her lack of social standing are so real. I suffered through high school as well feeling like the fat outcast with no friends but the one pity friend. Of course I am still friends with her today, so obviously she wasn't a pity friend, but when you are in high school you see things differently.

OK I will stop talking about myself and get back to the book. Everything that I have been talking about that attracted me to this character and this book are in the very first chapter. Imagine how eagerly read the rest of the book and how much I enjoyed it more when Angels and Demons and hunky guys cropped up!

This book is a must read for just about anybody. It might be a little slow at first, but it picks up. The characters are well developed, you can feel emotionally connected to them. The writing is wonderfully descriptive and engaging. I think this is a great book and I look forward to reading more from this author. OH! And the ending! I wish I could tell you about it. It was really well done. Just read it and you'll find out.

Disclaimer: I received a copy free for reviewing purposes. Regardless, all opinions are my own. I was not required to write a positive review.

Sabrina Olteanu says

I received this book in exchange for my honest review. Thank you so much Itching for Books and Lisa Temple for the chance of reading Illuminating Gracie.

I thought this is going to be another book about an obnoxious teenager. Guess who was wrong?! I couldn't believe how perfect the story is written. Everyone had moments in they're life where they just want to go back in time and redo something. We wished it so hard and still nothing. So we accept the situation. But, this isn't the case. We have in this story Grace, a seventeen years old girl who has had enough bad luck and suffering to last her a life time. She doesn't have strength to do anything at all, school isn't great because she can't concentrate and she has a bad impression about herself. No matter what she does, Grace hates her life and she wants to change it. When she gets the chance tot change everything she doesn't waste any time!

I don't know how to even describe this book to do it justice. It is just a great story! The author really managed to describe Grace so perfectly I thought I knew her for a long time and I could understand what she was going through. When I started reading the book I didn't know this was going to be such an amazing journey! The book really teaches you something about life! You should give it a chance because you won't regret it! I highly recommend it!

Melanie says

(4.5 stars) This is one of those books that the longer it sits with me, the more I like it! While I was reading it, there were parts that I absolutely loved and highlighted, especially near the beginning. Then it took a strange turn, yet that part was still essential to the story. It ended strong, though, and I enjoyed getting some questions answered. Finally, there was the Epilogue which was unsettling but has me wanting to read the next book asap.

I enjoyed Gracie's relationships. She met two good-looking guys, Locke and Merchison, who were both vying for her attention. They are also keeping secrets from her and she wants to find out what they are. She's not sure which one she can trust and feels confused. I definitely had my favorite and after some other things are revealed, she ends up with the one I want her with. However, they are both young and still have a lot to go through so I'm hoping they can make it to the end.

I also enjoyed Willem and Mrs. B. They were mysterious and odd and hard for Gracie to figure out. They gave Gracie some good advice but, like the guys, she wasn't exactly sure if she could trust them. We were given enough hints throughout the story to figure out who they were and I enjoyed the reveal to Gracie and her subsequent "illumination." Gracie has a good sense of humor, too, and her internal conversations were fun to read.

This is a great story illustrating good vs. evil and second chances. Gracie learns what her relationship is to everyone else and it will be interesting to see where the story goes from here. Gracie is young so will she stay on the path she's currently on which will change the course of her life or will she fall back into old, familiar patterns? I'm looking forward to finding out!

Mel's Shelves

Donna Zink says

Wasn't sure what to expect when I began to read "Illuminating Gracie". What a Treat! It's a YA book that should be read by any one young or old (like me ;-)) You'll find humor, self-doubt, mystery, and plenty of angel against demon action. Gracie is a very believable teenager that many if not all can identify with. Time after time something she either said, thought or did triggered a memory that had me nodding and saying to myself "that is so totally me when I was a teen". It has a wonderful message to anyone young or older that should be taken to heart. But it also has plenty of suspense and action. I would, will and have recommend "Illuminating Gracie" to any and everyone. Read and enjoy!

LaDonna McNutt says

Up to page 159- Halfway Point

This...this is shocking. I am slowly but surely falling in love with this book. The descriptions are beautiful, and the characters are written so well.

Gracie Bennett is the picture of a sullen, self-conscious teenage girl, with the sarcastic attitude to dominate them all. Her story really kicks off, when after delivering food to some secluded house down some Alabama dirt road, she's given a job offer from the sassy and stout Mrs. B, and her kind hearted, instant "good-guy-vibe" employee/friend, Willem. To old and quirky folks living in a big mansion, offering to pay her a small fortune to run errands? Oh yeah, she jumped on it. And, of course, I could never forget the boys...boyssss. Merchison Spear, -Merc- the drop dead gorgeous, Jesus-fry-eggs-on-that, bad boy, who rescues her from her flat tire and constant feelings of self-doubt, and Locke Wingard, Willem's golden boy grandson, and king of the whiplash effect personalities...who always happens to look like an Angelic J. Crew model. While Gracie cannot even begin to fathom why these two perfect specimens would be vying over her attention, a few things out of the ordinary start to occur, such as her over hearing Mrs. B and Willem fight with Locke over her "safety," and how Merc would "protect her with his life," Uhm, hello, ominous much?

But anyway, in order to not give away any early pertinent keys to the "mystery" of this story, I shall not go any farther, but to say that fans of Becca Fitzpatrick and Lauren Kate may very well have to move over and make room, because Lisa Temple is pulling in, and honestly, the competition is just so Fear and Loathing.

Rest of review:

Alright, childrens. It took me a bit to formulate a halfway decent response for the last half of this book, but

I've finally got it.

We finally find out the mystery around the whole Save Gracie plot: She's an "angel-lite", a human who's been in contact with an angel, making her stronger, faster, and beautiful...and the target of demons, intent on using her for the summoning of their "Master"- Lucifer himself. The ring leader of this crazy-A demon circle? Beladona, a fallen angel, and the brother of a certain golden boy, with angel status of his own. Who's that, you may ask? Our lovely little Locke. Yup. And who is it that Beladona's been parading around as, sinking their clutches deeper and deeper into our dear Gracie, under the false pretense of trust and protection? She's tall, she's blonde, and if you've read the book, good luck not wanting to punch her out when you realize. And of course, I'll keep the BEST twist to myself, because honestly, I don't think you can handle it.

As you approach the close to Illuminating Gracie, prepare yourself for plot twists 'comin out the word works, y'all, and I look forward to waiting with you all for the sequel ^_^

Dawn says

I was given a free copy of this book for an honest review.

Illuminating Gracie is a good young adult fantasy. It grabbed my interest from the beginning and flowed well. Lisa C. Temple's writing is easy to read and I enjoy her sense of humor.

The first half of Illuminating Gracie is about Gracie finding out who the new people she has met actually are and how she is connected to them. She starts out as a typical negative teen with a poor self image, but as the story progresses she begins to mature.

The second half of the book is more about angels and demons, the age old fight between good and evil, and although it was still good, I didn't enjoy it as much as the first half.

I couldn't think of a better ending for Illuminating Gracie. Things were resolved for the moment but you know there's so much more that can happen. In other words, I'm looking forward to the sequel!

Kimber Wheaton says

I received this book from the author in exchange for an honest review

Illuminating Gracie is a paranormal take on a coming of age story. I think at some point we've all wished for a 'redo' for some event in our lives. Can you imagine the opportunity for a complete 'redo' of your entire life? Grace's story is complicated by the influences of good and evil vying for her soul. The choices Grace makes and will make affect so much more than her life, but she is a confused, bitter seventeen year old girl forced into a situation she doesn't understand.

Grace is an interesting character. She is very intelligent, yet lacks motivation to do well in school. She thinks she's an overweight, unattractive girl, though the way the guys in the story act, that just isn't true. Overcome with OCD and ADHD, Grace has a hard time in day to day life. She has a loving family that obviously cares about her, but she just doesn't see it. Sometimes it gets tiring just how much the poor girl wallows in self-

pity. Grace is in desperate need of a mental makeover or she is destined to walk a dark path in life.

When fate lands Grace at the mansion inhabited by Mrs. B, Willem, and Locke, her life immediately starts to change. She agrees to take a job assisting Mrs. B with her autobiography. In one day Grace lands two dates, both with drop-dead gorgeous guys. Merc is enigmatic and Grace feels an immediate, yet undeniable pull to him, even though part of her screams 'danger'. Locke is the all-American boy next door type. Grace feels comfortable around him, but doesn't feel the pull toward him that she feels for Merc.

The pacing starts out a bit on the slow side, but picks up significantly about a third of the way through. Lisa Temple's sweeping descriptions are so detailed, the scenes just leap off the pages into the mind's eye. There were a few times I felt a bit mired by descriptions, but that occurred mainly when I was desperate to learn the next secret. This novel is full of so many twists and turns, some the reader just doesn't see coming. I especially liked the way Grace's best friend, March Ann, ended up being portrayed. All I can say is 'wow'. This is the first book in a series, and that's made clear in the epilogue. I'm not sure how I feel about the final revelation in the epilogue. I can't say it necessarily surprised me, but it still threw me for a loop.

I recommend *Illuminating Gracie* to everyone high school and up that enjoys a deep, reflective story. The novel is well written, using amazing imagery and imagination. I look forward to seeing what else Lisa Temple has to offer.

Kimberly Higgins says

When I learned that my childhood friend, Lisa C. Temple, had written a book, I was very impressed by the sheer accomplishment of such a task, and I ordered a copy. What a treat was in store for me!

One of the first things that struck me, was that I knew these places described in the book. I was born and raised in Montgomery, Alabama, and often traveled those back roads to Lake Martin, as well as Wetumpka, and surrounding areas. So I really felt like I was with Gracie as she drove down that dark road on a particularly fateful night, cranking tunes and trying to be brave. (And speaking of tunes, I would be remiss not to mention the clever use of an appropriate song title for each chapter!)

I also enjoyed the southern sayings and colloquialisms; phrases with which I grew up, and that always remind me of my mother, who would deliver these with her soft drawl. Lisa captured this very well, and for those who were not raised in this part of the country, you can rest assured the depiction is authentic.

Beyond these delights though, lies the story itself. I immediately identified with Gracie, remembering the doubts I had as a young woman, and I think readers of all ages, male and female, will also understand these emotions. The story also contains little mysteries that keep you turning the pages, as gems of insight turn up along the way. It is a story of hope and redemption, and a beautiful request of each of us to let our light shine brightly.

I look forward to the sequel...

Ronda Clancy says

From the very beginning I was fascinated with the concept of being able to redo your life. There are parts, some big, some small, that we would all love the chance to go back and do differently. Lisa Temple has done a wonderful job of letting us do just that with Mrs. B. and Gracie. Her characters are beautifully written and keeps you hurrying to finish each page.

Dawn Barkalow says

I love the unexpected in a book and Illuminating Gracie delivered! It was a page turner from the beginning and the end was a very delightful "Wow!". The characters in the book were intriguing, unpredictable, and complicated - but also comfortable; the kind of people you would want to know and spend some time with. In addition to the wonderful characters and story, there is an uplifting message of purpose and hope. I highly recommend this book!

Michele Centeno says

Like in my comment....this book would be a great movie.....very deep, psychological meets paranormal...Lisa has created a new genre!!!
