



A Darkness Strange and Lovely

Susan Dennard

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Perfect for fans of Libba Bray's *The Diviners* and Cassandra Clare's *The Infernal Devices* series, this spellbinding sequel to *Something Strange and Deadly* delivers a mix of supernatural forces and intense romance, set against the enchanting backdrop of nineteenth-century Paris.

With her brother dead and her mother insane, Eleanor Fitt is alone. Even the Spirit-Hunters—Joseph, Jie, and the handsome Daniel—have fled to Paris. So when Eleanor hears the vicious barking of hounds and sees haunting yellow eyes, she fears that the Dead, and the necromancer Marcus, are after her.

To escape, Eleanor boards a steamer bound for France. There she meets Oliver, a young man who claims to have known her brother. But Oliver harbors a dangerous secret involving necromancy and black magic that entices Eleanor beyond words. If she can resist him, she'll be fine. But when she arrives in Paris, she finds that the Dead have taken over, and there's a whole new evil lurking. And she is forced to make a deadly decision that will go against everything the Spirit-Hunters stand for.

In Paris, there's a price for this darkness strange and lovely, and it may have Eleanor paying with her life.

A Darkness Strange and Lovely Details

Date : Published July 23rd 2013 by Harper Collins Harper Teen

ISBN : 9780062083296

Author : Susan Dennard

Format : Hardcover 408 pages

Genre : Young Adult, Science Fiction, Steampunk, Fantasy, Paranormal, Horror, Zombies, Historical, Historical Fiction

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From Reader Review A Darkness Strange and Lovely for online ebook

Petra says

Almost as good as the first one. Although a bit just like the typical middle book. A lot of drama, and stupid choices made my Eleanor that didn't seem like her at all. Still, I really liked it, and I'm really looking forward to reading the last book.

***Kiersten* says**

Once again, the story was lots of fun! I think I dislike Eleanor even more in this book than the last; She whined the whole time and made decisions that were stupid and ended up being harmful to others. Enduring the obnoxious characters to see this series through to the end!

Rimsha Salam says

After Reading:

Ok so clearly this one also gets the award of excellence, it was brilliant the plot, the characters everything although I think the author could have done a better job at hiding the villain increase a suspense a bit more, but still overall it was amazing the moment Daniel and Eleanor met was perfect and I swear I laughed so hard at what Eleanor said!

Check out my blogs for more reviews and book stuff: <http://ramblingsofabookworm3.blogspot...>
<http://ramblings-of-a-bookworm.tumblr...>

Before Reading:

Me when I saw the name of (Something Strange and Deadly, #2) :

Me when i read the Blurb of "A Darkness Strange and Lovely" :

Me when i read the release date:

Me waiting for it to be released:

alt="">

Edit:

The cover !!!!

shady boots | #WatchPOSE says

[I think he's gay, in which case YAAAAAASSSS. I would totally applaud Susan Dennard for doing this. (hide spoiler)]

Sarah says

Even though this book has multiple flaws I will bring up, it possesses one quality I've struggled to find in books lately; it's entertaining.

Boredom is my worst enemy, and I did not experience it during this book.

It was acceptable, but that doesn't mean I'll stop ranting about every PNR trope in it. That's what I live for.

Trope number 1: Our MC is like that secondary character, often best friend, found in fiction, who is *just there* without doing anything but still people worship her. Speshul snowflake!!!

Then near the end this character accidentally does something heroic and are deemed important to the story. Why is Eleanor our narrator? There's nothing remotely unique about her, she has zero personality and strength and she relies on others to save her.

Eleanor herself claims to be strong and intelligent, but never proves this. There's little to her character besides the constant damsel in distress.

Trope number 2: ..You know what's coming, don't you? Every time I go into a YA paranormal book, I brace myself for a **love triangle**.

I was pleasantly surprised to see that Something Strange and Deadly only featured one love interest. 10 points to you, Glen Coco!

As I dove into this sequel, I immediately had a bad feeling.

drumroll INTRODUCING OUR SECOND LOVE INTEREST.

Because a paranormal series just isn't the same without a love triangle!

We have a "smoking hot" stalker demon, a character *never* before seen in the genre.

Buy one now and get extra angst for free.

New guy Oliver is a manipulative asshole and possible alcoholic. He possesses unique and charming qualities such as *dark, moody and mysterious*.

Not to mention that he he's a stalking creep.

He sneaks into her room while Eleanor is away and waits until she's undressing to announce his presence. What the actual fuck? Since Eleanor has the intelligence of a cracker, this isn't seen as weird and it is never mentioned again.

Trope number 3: Now make love interest nr 1 go from his okay but bland and shallow state to jealous and overprotective, all according to the rules. The first time he sees his rival, he turns on his alpha male mode and assumes the main character's love life is *his* business. This is all shortly after he denied having romantic feelings for her, and pushed her away because it was awful convenient for the plot.

Trope number 4: Cue angst and soap opera writing. Make the MC dumber and more confused by every chapter. Throw in some magic and secondary characters, and you're done!

What made this a good sequel (aka things I liked about the book but have little memory of, hence the mostly negative review):

* A new setting. We've now moved from Eleanor's hometown Philadelphia to Paris.

* A fast-paced plot.

* An interesting set-up for the next book.

* Lastly, it is surprisingly addictive and easy to read.

Not a series I would necessarily recommend, but it's worth 3 stars for pure enjoyment. Also I'd take angst before boredom any day. Even if it makes my blood boil.

Kassidy says

What a fabulous sequel!!!

There's a ton of action, mystery, and suspense. I love the historical fiction setting and the supernatural elements of zombies, magic, and necromancy. There's a super creepy feel to this story and you never know who to trust. I loved all of the developments with the magical aspects and the new character that we are introduced to named Oliver! Eleanor has to really fight the war of good and evil in the real world, but also within her self. Her character grows so much! This is a wild ride, and I could not stop reading! It's very fast-paced with new revelations around every corner. The story mostly centers around this one mystery and it was so fun to find all of the clues and figure out what was going on! A WONDERFUL sequel and I cannot wait for the next book :D

Sarah Mac says

3.5 stars. This was an enjoyable book that showed actual writing talent -- not common enough in YA paranormal/dystopian fic, alas. But it wasn't as good as the first.

Spoilers ahead.

I dislike recapping series plots because they're too reliant on the previous book(s) -- and this one is pretty much what it says in the blurb, so I'll be lazy & head directly to the positives.

-*No love triangle.* That in itself is worthy of a parade. :P The Eleanor/Daniel romance doesn't progress much, but neither does it go downhill. They're both in love with each other -- that's quite obvious -- and neither see the need to test their feelings by adding a triangle to the plot.

-Expanding on the lack of triangle...I was relieved that the "Oliver thing" is nothing to with romance. Oliver is a demon -- more specifically, he's a demon who was bound to Eleanor's brother Elijah. Oliver & Elijah's relationship is complicated & mysterious. It's not been spelled out, but I'm 99% sure Oliver was in love with Elijah (whether they were lovers remains unclear). In any case, neither Oliver nor Eleanor has any romantic interest in the other. Yay. :)

-The zombie bits were good.

-The scene where Eleanor raises a bunch of dead animals (plus one zombie butler) was great. Very vivid & creepy.

...But there are some negatives.

-The first 200 pages wandered quite a bit. The whole thing with the Hell Hounds was interesting enough, but it seemed unnecessary. Even when it (finally) tied into the climactic battle scene, it still felt smooshed into the plot.

-Eleanor's 'phantom' hand. I was really looking forward to her having to adjust to life & zombie-hunting after the amputation -- few YA heroines face a legit handicap, so it would've made her stand out. But instead she's given a weird phantom-demonic hand courtesy of Oliver's magic. WHY? Eleanor is an untrained necromancer, but surely there would be other ways to obscure her scent from the Hounds. Just giving her a phantom hand struck me as a cop-out. (Supposedly the hand will go away when Oliver is freed, but still.)

-Not enough zombie-killing in the first half. The synopsis is misleading in that respect. There's minimal zombie action until things get cooking in the second half -- and the necromancy stuff just isn't as exciting. I realize that they're tied together, but Eleanor's frustrations & Joseph's warnings aren't nearly as much fun as splattering zombie brains on parasols.

...So. I suspect this suffered from Middle Child Syndrome. It's not a bad book, by any means -- but be prepared for some dragging & necromancer/demon infodumps before Daniel & the zombies make their appearance. Hopefully #3 will deliver a steadier supply of action. (I also hope they'll go to Egypt. *crosses fingers*)

Maddie says

Gosh, this is a beyond amazing book. Full review to come!

Okay, if you haven't figured out by this point that I absolutely adore Susan Dennard's books, you probably should go back and read some of my older posts.

Needless to say, I was absolutely ecstatic to receive an ARC of *A Darkness Strange and Lovely* by Susan Dennard. I completely devoured this book. Mainly because, it was AMAZING.

It has a slightly different feel than *Something Strange and Deadly* partially because of the different location (it's set in Paris. Does it get any better than that?), and because the Spirit Hunters aren't in it at the very beginning (I admittedly counted down the pages until they came into the story...). But, that didn't cause me to like the book any less than the other one. In fact, I think I liked it more than the first book, which is pretty impressive. Most times for me, I don't like the sequel to a novel nearly as much as the original (particularly with trilogies) with rare exceptions such as *Catching Fire*. Yeah, this book was THAT good.

I am in no way exaggerating when I say, at some points reading this book, I was sincerely gasping and generally freaking out along with Eleanor. It had me entranced from the very first line.

I cannot recommend the awesomeness that is A Darkness Strange and Lovely by Susan Dennard enough. I give it 5 out of 5 Stars.

I hope all of you go buy it when it come out on July 23.

Maddie

Keertana says

I think it's safe to say that I've finally learned not to count my chickens before they've hatched. If I'd had to pick one book this year I was wholly confident of loving, it would have been this one. Not only were the initial reviews stellar, but I had loved Dennard's debut and couldn't imagine not feeling the same rush of emotions for this novel. Thus, color me surprised to find myself underwhelmed and unimpressed by the end of this book. ADSaL is an excellent sequel - there is no doubt about that - but it is sadly not the sequel I wanted. Not in the least.

What makes Dennard such a strong writer is her excellent command of language and plot. Once again, she manages to seamlessly transport her reader into her chosen time period, this time re-creating Paris as it once was with its societal mores. Furthermore, it is clear that this trilogy has been thoughtfully pored over and planned. Dennard skillfully introduces Eleanor into the world of necromancy and drops just enough hints about the evil Marcus to keep us guessing and aching for the eventual conclusion that is to come. And all of this is done so, so well. From the introduction of Ollie, the demon who served Eleanor's brother and will soon come to serve her, to the battle Eleanor must face between embracing necromancy to save herself or choosing the safer path of her Spirit Hunter friends, every plot device is meaningful and furthers both the overarching story arc and Eleanor's own personal growth.

Yet, despite that, I was sadly disappointed by this. For one, Eleanor herself has intrinsically changed. As someone now dabbling in the "black arts" she feels more alone than ever and although she retains her headstrong spirit, she also turns to make many decisions - such as trusting strangers - that I couldn't comprehend. Furthermore, she no longer seeks libraries, brandishes parasols, or spends all that much time with her old friends. In other words, I found her rather difficult to connect with and though I appreciated her inner struggle, I can't say I wholly understood it. I still continue to love Eleanor and her narration, but perhaps not as much as I once did. She is a different woman alone than she is with the Spirit Hunters and I was especially unhappy by the fact that the secondary characters I'd grown to love were given such little screen time. In fact, they only appeared in the second-half of the novel and even then, only briefly. Although Eleanor's interactions with the Spirit Hunters were packed with depth, the majority of her storyline was spent with Ollie, who I couldn't seem to completely trust for the majority of the book. Additionally, Eleanor makes a few other new friends who are seemingly forgotten by the end - I do hope they reappear and have some significance in the concluding book.

As per the romance, the one aspect of this book I was possibly most looking forward to, I have to admit I'm torn. On one hand, Dennard perfectly captures the stubborn will of both Daniel and Eleanor and their few interactions are charged, each of them moving in tentative circles. At the same time, though, their relationship didn't progress much. Rather, this book only prolongs the inevitable. If it had had at least one meaningful conversation perhaps I wouldn't have felt so underwhelmed, but sadly I was. I do certainly appreciate that this middle novel was more a character-driven scope of Eleanor herself, but with her so changed and the secondary characters so absent, it was unfortunate not to have the romance to fall back on.

ADSaL may not have worked out for me, but it is still a stunning novel. I continue to be amazed at how perfectly this book ties together plot threads from the first novel and the inevitable conclusion to follow and it is a pleasure to read a book that skips the dreaded MBS entirely. ADSaL doesn't have a single boring word in its pages and will likely keep you glued to your seat. Despite its positive elements, I did enjoy its predecessor much more and missed many notable quirks and secondary characters in this one. I'm hoping they're all back in full blast for the conclusion, which I hope will resemble Dennard's debut a little more. All in all, not a bad book, just a bad one to expect too much out of.

Mitch says

Something Strange and Deadly was one of those books that's a lot of fun but also could've used a bit more depth. I mean, I like steampunk, I like zombies, why wouldn't I like steampunk *and* zombies? - but at the same time, the plot was also extremely predictable and the same cheesy humor that made the story so engaging also made it hard to take seriously. Great in small doses, but why would I want to read the sequel? Well as it turns out, because A Darkness Strange and Lovely (great title by the way, and completely appropriate to boot) is a second book that grows and matures almost as much as its heroine, Eleanor Fitt, that's why.

I usually like to start by talking about how awesome the plot is because I'm the kind of guy who gets bored easily, especially if I feel like I haven't gotten my fill of scenes of gentlemen getting their arms chomped on by zombies or ladies screaming in all directions while uselessly waving their parasols about in panic, but as I said in my review of the first book, my favorite part of this series actually isn't the zombie on human violence, but the characters (or at least some of them). Eleanor's a character who's all about balance - in the first book, it was being a proper Victorian lady on one hand and finding excitement by doing her own thing against her mother's wishes on the other, here, she's balancing the corrupting influences of her family's necromantic powers against the Spirit Hunter's ~~reluctance~~ downright hostility towards that kind of magic. I love how Susan Dennard has written a book where the right answers aren't just shoved in my face, where everything isn't black and white, but rather, asks questions like - is black magic inherently evil? - or is it the person using it that makes it evil? and then gave me answers that could go either way. And I also love how the events of the first book, which seemed so silly at the time, have transformed Eleanor's character from a naive ingenue into a gritty, more serious survivor type here - one of my favorite lines in fact is Eleanor talking about how she used to think Clarence was just a narrow minded suitor and her brother just an innocent victim, back when she was naive and stupid and thought the world was a good place - I've always said despite Something Strange and Deadly's shallowness and high level of predictability, a lot of the book was also about exceeding expectations and breaking stereotypes, and it's nice to see exactly that confirmation. Even the allure of necromancy breaks the mold; as the title says, darkness really is strange and lovely, and dangerous, and corrupting, and necessary, and misunderstood, and maybe in the right hands even a little bit good, and I just found all the different attitudes and nuances to what Eleanor must do and the difficult choices she has to make really well done.

The plot too I can say is a vast improvement from the first book. I'm sure I wasn't the only one who had the identity of the necromancer all figured out well before the end of that book, but this time around my theory going into the second half actually turned out to be wrong. Dennard definitely does a better job than before throwing red herrings around, complicating the situation behind *les morts* - the Dead - in Paris. In fact, one of the better decisions she's made is introducing new character Oliver, who on the surface appears harmless enough, but then she builds in all these clues pointing to him as the culprit, many of them in offhand remarks that I don't think the other characters even caught on to. After how obvious everything was in the first book, I

had to check myself several times, trying to decide if an obvious villain really was *the* villain or figuring out how to explain another clue pointing to Oliver, and, well, even if the end result isn't exactly that hard to guess, I'm still glad Dennard managed to keep a few other things, like the motive behind the outbreak of undead, hidden up her sleeve until the last moment. Still, a few misdirects turned out to be great fake outs yet at the same time pretty unsatisfying hanging plot threads - the whole situation with Clarence for example - and I just kept getting the feeling this sequel seemed almost too short compared to the first book, with a few characters, Jie in particular, acting like Dennard ran out of ideas of things for them to do, so they ended up basically just showing up for old times sake and then being written out of the story. Other parts too, the entire situation in Paris in fact, could've been expanded on and just felt like it needed to be less rushed and used more development. Thankfully though, there are still plenty of zombie attacks along with other new supernatural threats, because I for one could always use more zombie on snooty French socialite violence, you know?

In fact, the only thing that really would've made this better would be if Daniel were eaten by a horde of the ravenous undead (yeah I really don't like him). I'm not saying this to incite fangirl wrath, but as I said, I just don't like things that are shoved in my face, and despite how I feel Dennard has done an awesome job making sure Eleanor falling for the allure of necromancy isn't shoved in my face, well, she shoves Daniel in my face, and it's annoying. Even worse, the love triangle with Clarence is still unresolved (view spoiler) and until halfway through the story I could've sworn I'd be seeing a tetrahedron with Oliver too (thank goodness there aren't more characters or it'd be some sort of weird multidimensional web thing). And to add insult to injury, even though the other major characters all have fairly defined roles - new guy Oliver as Eleanor's connection to her dead brother while representing the dangers and unknowns of necromancy, and then Joseph being the safe mentor who just might possibly be holding her back with his caution and dislike of dark magic, with neither of them completely right or wrong and their whole situation as complicated as Eleanor's conflict over her necromantic powers - then unfortunately there's Daniel and he's just no offense the useless love interest who's only good for making Eleanor doubt herself, and I'm just the kind of guy who finds the designated love interest character a completely uninteresting, irksome cliche... and I just don't like his character... and *somebody* needs to be zombie chow... and I should probably stop before this paragraph devolves into a full blown rant of all the gruesome ways Daniel could be offed for the benefit of the story... a little girl with blackened teeth and the fetid rank of decaying flesh gorging on his intestines as they spilled out from a massive gash on his stomach, chewing on them like sausage links... OK I'm stopping now, I promise.

Bottom line though, Something Strange and Deadly was superficial, silly fun that belies a lot of heart, A Darkness Strange and Lovely forgoes the lightness of the first book but is still quite enjoyable in its own way. Now if only the zombie horde had claimed one more victim before all's good and done...

Nancy The book junkie says

Review to come!

Navdha says

I love writing bad reviews. Call me a twisted person, but I really do. When you love a book too much, you don't have words to describe how full of awesome it is. But when you despise one, you can write a book

going on about the character flaws, the plot holes, the wretched romance.. and you get the idea. What makes me sad though is writing reviews for a sequel that fails to charm me; more so when the sequel is to a book that I had really enjoyed.

A Darkness Strange and Lovely can be summarized in these few lines:

Eleanor goes off to Paris to escape Marcus and join the Spirit Hunters, leaving behind her mother who apparently has lost her marbles.

She meets a demon called Oliver, (view spoiler) who saves her ass more than a dozen times, but since our Eleanor is an angst, ungrateful ass, she returns the favor by fizzing the poor guy. With electricity if you're wondering. And no, he's not a love interest. Thank the Gods!

She whines and prances around, all while trying to control her new found necromantic powers ~~neeromantic is a word? O.o Go me!~~, which believe me, is cumbersome because, you know, she's a special snowflake and is one powerful necromancer who can fight off Marcus but is still too naïve to use her powers and too stubborn to embrace it. The same ol' regurgitated crap..

But that shouldn't even be your concern here. Ask me why. Ask me! Because..

Marcus doesn't even make a real appearance in the entire book. Ha!

shakes head And there you have another sequel that fails to stand alone on its own.

If you find the lack of a storyline disappointing, I guess I shouldn't mention how unflattering and downright annoying the characters are?

Oh well. I'll let you know nonetheless.

Let's start with Oliver. He's a smart demon, a witty demon in fact. He is definitely better company than any other character in the book. But he has a habit of nagging Eleanor, and even if I accept that he has a reason to do what he does, I still don't trust him completely. Then we have Daniel. He only makes an appearance in the book to make Eleanor's monologue unbearable (and that too with his monocle. BAH!). The only character who didn't lose *character* was Joseph. He does his fair share of saving the world and judging Eleanor (both at the same time if you must know) but he seemed like the only character I remembered from the last book. Then of course we have the French characters with their overly used French expressions in English (The book is set in Paris people!). Seriously though, is it too much to ask for an author to simply mention that the foreign characters spoke in a different accent? Why oh why do they have to write in that accent? And why don't they realize how unrealistic it feels? Please, someone. Stop the trend. Stop it.

does breathing exercises

Anyhoo, I was saying?

Yeah, so, as the show stopper for my character highlights, we have Eleanor. She is not the girl I knew in *Something Strange and Deadly*. The Eleanor I knew there was more feisty and less annoying. Sure, the circumstances were different and now she has to deal with a lot, like a crazy mom, living expenses, rumor mills, sideway glances, murmured gossips, demons, necromancy, infatuation (please, what she has for David is not love), lies, deceit, pressure and all of that with only one hand! I should cut her some slack, and after listing down everything she had to face I do feel sympathetic, but why did she have to be so clueless and snappy and careless? I still don't understand how she was always suspicious of Oliver and not of her new friend. And don't even get me started on how she left Elijah's letters just lying around. If I were Oliver, I'd

have thrown her off the balcony. You know what? Scratch that. If I were Oliver, I'd have made her a Les Morts special cuisine for the attitude alone. She was pathetic when it came to David and the only times she did seem like her old self was when she took a stand against Joseph, but even that didn't seem to leave an impact with her useless pretenses and bitchiness in general.

Alas, the only redeeming quality of the book is the confusion it leaves behind. Its child's play to guess who the villain is, but the motive behind the villain's actions is still beyond me. There is some much needed action towards the end and a promising cliffy for the third book to set foot on. However sadly, it isn't much to go on since there is a lot of uncovered ground with almost all the mysteries of book 1 still buried inside the closet and more piling up from book 2.

In the end, I'd only like to say that writing a bad review for a book you were looking forward to is really sad. So with a heavy heart and a disgruntled sigh, I rate this book only 2 stars.

Christina (A Reader of Fictions) says

I have been waiting for A Darkness Strange and Lovely since the moment I finished Something Strange and Deadly Susan Dennard captured my heart and my imagination in her debut, so I was eager to see what she would do with the next book. Happily, there is no second book syndrome here and ADSaL has all the elements that made SSaD such a delight.

Without a doubt, it's the narrative voice that makes Dennard's series stand out from the pack of paranormal offerings. Eleanor is so many things: clever, silly, practical, powerful, self-conscious, and infuriating. Her voice rings so clearly through this first person narrative, and she really doesn't sound like anyone but herself. Even when she's at her most irritating, when she digs herself a whole of lies so deep she can't see out because she's afraid no one will accept her, she's still her kooky, charming self. Also, the girl can eat, and I suspect she's a bit chunkier than the usual YA heroine, which is just another reason to love her.

Dennard really steps out of the box with Eleanor. She's no stereotype. She speaks her mind, eats anything she can get her hands on, and has far more power than her companions. In fact, her power scares everyone but herself. Actually, scratch that; it scares Eleanor a bit too. In the face of the most extraordinary circumstances, Eleanor is the kind of person who never stops trying, even when she only has one hand or everyone has turned their backs on her. Though she makes some really stupid choices, I still have so much respect and friendship in my heart for Eleanor.

The plot this time comes with a bit less zombie mayhem, and a bit more mystery. Eleanor sets off to join the Spirit Hunters in Paris, where a Marquis is hosting them. Paris is beset by les Morts, and the Spirit Hunters have yet to figure out who has been sacrificing people and raising their corpses. Dennard does a good job throwing out a red herring, and making things a little bit twisty without it being overwhelming.

Props, too, on romance remaining on the back burner, slowly simmering, but not to the boil stage yet. Though it's a good one, I think the time to unfold is necessary and will only make the moment when Daniel and Eleanor officially get together that much sweeter. Both of them still have some growing to do, and I like that Dennard gives them that time, rather than rushing them into some super intense forever love.

Dennard adds a couple of new cast members, most notably Laure and Oliver. Eleanor meets both on her

passage to France, and I think I like them. They're definitely both interesting figures, and I want to know more about them. Clearly, Laure's going to be important in the third book, but, for now, there was a lot of time spent on her that doesn't seem to have accomplished much. Oliver's pretty awesome, and I like the dynamic he adds to the group, the tension. I am also thrilled that Oliver is not another love interest for Eleanor.

Readers who enjoyed Something Strange and Deadly will likely be pleased with Susan Dennard's sequel. Also, the moment ADSaL concludes, you're going to want book three something fierce, because it is going to be epic.

Shauna says

[WHAT A HOT, HOT KISS NEAR THE END. HOLY SMOKE! (hide spoiler)]

Giselle says

Dies of pretty
