



Help Wanted

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Cusick's latest thriller brings to life what every teenager both wants and dreads--the part-time job. When Robin Bailey takes a job as a tutor for Mr. Swanson's shy daughter, the unreasonable demands soon begin to outweigh the compensation. Eventually Robin's job becomes her worst nightmare.

Help Wanted Details

Date : Published October 1st 1993 by Simon Pulse

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Author : Richie Tankersley Cusick

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From Reader Review Help Wanted for online ebook

Donna says

I would have taken the blurb from Goodreads like I normally do, but it was just outright wrong. So I got it directly from the source.

HELP WANTED is a book that's halfway to being the ridiculous cheese of RL Stine, but it's also half-grounded in something resembling reality. Robin appears to be a rather level-headed, somewhat well-rounded, character that comes off as genuine and like a real human being. So does her friend Walt. Not a whole lot of drama or hyperbole going on with either of them, all things considered. Parker is an egotistical jerk that Robin puts in his place time and time again and luckily doesn't fall for his crap at all. And her alleged best friend Faye is just a stuck up, drama queen bitch. Not sure how her and Robin are even friends, they're so opposites. And Faye isn't even that appealing as a human. Completely self-centered and not all that supportive of Robin, Robin would have been wise to ditch this one years ago. Luckily Faye just kind of falls off the map halfway into the book, probably because Cusick realized she was kind of a twit.

The story itself was compelling and while I wasn't buying the supernatural slant that kept getting spun, I did keep trying to figure out who was behind what and what exactly was going on. I didn't see the ending coming, which is awesome with these books because even I can see them from a million miles away. It was also kind of nice the way it ended, rather atypical without giving away any spoilers.

Of course, what would cheesy old school YA horror be without a couple of ridiculous deaths? You get a solid three of them within the pages of the book, four if you want to count the stepmother, but that's off-page. Cusick doesn't have the ridiculous and absurd creatively with deaths that Stine does, but there's some literal backstabbing and crawling maggots happening. So kudos for that.

One of the truer thriller books coming out of that era, and some of the more level-headed, HELP WANTED lands closer to the top in terms of re-readability and standing the test of time. Most of the characters (at least those that matter) aren't caricatures of real people and the drama isn't so over the top that it comes off as absurd. Robin and Walt are great characters that are actually relatable and the ending has a good twist. I really can't ask for much more when it comes to these books!

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Steen says

The only thing that kept me going with this one was the mystery of who did it. I actually finished this a few weeks ago and sadly already I forgot a lot of what happened. I do remember that I didn't like the character interactions because they felt forced or out of place and I was surprised at the ending. All in all I don't think this was her best work, I think so far this is the one that I have enjoyed the least.

Madeleine says

I found it very enjoyable, it even gave me some scares which I found fantastic. The novel was a thrilling and captivating tale that kept me refraining from putting it down, it not only has all the good making of a proper scare but also an ending that leaves you wanting more and is somewhat surprising to the tale. I would absolutely recommend it for some scares but also a great twist.

Emma Ruth says

Yesterday something reminded me of a moment in Help Wanted, so when I woke up this morning I had the urge to give it a re-read. It's by far one of my favourite Point Horror books and among one of the first I've ever read. It never gets old, despite me knowing exactly what's going to happen and when.

There was one thing different about this re-read though, I realised how annoying the main character, Robin, really is. I don't know, maybe it's just her naivety, but I couldn't help yelling at her throughout most of the book. She's also way stubborn and easily scared, but that's partly why I love the book so much, if the main character had been more like Walt maybe nothing interesting would have happened. It should also be noted that Herk is totally awesome and I'd forgotten how much I adore his character.

Sarah says

More like 3.5

Mandy says

I had to add the cover of the copy I had and the new cover on amazon.

Robin dreams of spending her vacation with her friends but the only way that is going to happen is if she can raise the money for the trip. For a smart high school senior that shouldn't be too hard, all she has to do is find an after school job. As luck would have it the perfect job just happens to land in her lap taking inventory of old books for an eccentric old man.

However, something is looming in the shadows, the new girl is scared that her dead mother is trying to get her to join her and her brother is determined to drive Robin crazy. When Robin starts to believe that maybe something outside the normal is happening she enlists her a friend from school to help but will it be too late as she uncovers the truth about Manorwood?

It's been many years since I've read a Richie Tankersley Cusick novel. She was one of my favorite teen authors, and I even remember rushing home from the bookstore to dive into this one. I like the concept it's your typical teenage point horror thriller with just enough action to keep you guessing till the very end. The characters are great I felt I was really able to connect with Robin. I liked the twist at the end I honestly didn't see it coming but it works. A quick fast paced story that captures the heart as well as the imagination. I can't wait to re-read more of her books as I enjoyed this one so much.

Ken says

Robin decides to take up a part-time job at the wealthy Swanson family mansion as she's desperate for some extra cash. It seems simple enough, all Robin needs to do is rearrange all the books that had belonged to Lilith - who'd recently committed suicide.

But after a series of strange events at the house, is Lilith retuning from beyond the grave to give her daughter Claudia a warning?

I'm certain that this was one of the few Point Horrors that I'd not read before, so I was really hooked by the mystery.

I liked how the book teased the supernatural element, but with the Point Horror formula I know that this wasn't the case.

I was certainly invested enough to want to know who was behind it all!

Beth Monk says

I really don't think that I gel with Richie's writing, I feel there wasn't really anything happening throughout this story I wasn't kept on the edge of my seat like I want with these books. I have some more of her books so not going to write off Richie's books yet.

Vicki says

Fab tale lots of suspense and a twist at the end really liked it.

Annie says

Huge fan of Richie Tankersley Cusick. This book is creative and despite how I am someone who is usually quick to solve the mysteries, this book kept me guessing until the very end. The book was also paced really well and the pace really picks up toward the end.

Sati Marie Frost says

I liked this book a lot. It's quite different to the other Cusick books I've read - for one thing, Robin's mother isn't entirely absent, although we don't see her much - and there's more of a "normal" background than in books like *Trick or Treat* or *Teacher's Pet*. It is still a good read, though, with that creepy gothic feeling that Ms Cusick does so very well.

Robin, reserved and introverted class brain, applies for a job cataloguing books in a personal library. She's a little hesitant, because the job happens to be at Manorwood, a decaying gothic mansion that is home to Parker Swanson - the confident, arrogant hottie who just started at school - and his fragile blossom of a

stepsister, Claudia. Worse, the books that are to be catalogued belong to Claudia's dead mother, a medium (and reported witch, or something that rhymes with it) who killed herself some months back.

Someone is trying to terrorise Claudia, and bleeding-heart that Robin is, she's determined to protect her, even when Robin herself starts seeing phantoms in the bathtub and getting threatening notes tacked to her door. Claudia thinks it's her mother, haunting her from beyond the grave. Robin thinks there's a more prosaic meaning. Parker just thinks Claudia's a fruit loop. What's the truth?

The truth, or at least my subjective version of the truth, is that this is a pretty good book. It's probably at the lower end of the 4-star area, rather than the higher end the way *The Lifeguard* was, but still deserves a 4-star rating IMO. Robin is an interesting heroine, although I'd have liked to delve a bit deeper into her character - but I don't really expect to be able to in a 200-odd page book. I like that she's bookish and quiet; I find the bookish quiet heroines hold my interest much more than the party-girl ones. Parker could have been a bit more drawn out; I don't feel like we got enough of him, and he had a whole lot of potential. Ditto for Walt. Claudia is the one who really steals the show - she's a beautifully-written, very convincing portrayal of a wounded-flower girl who isn't quite sure if she's sane or not.

The plot is nicely twisty, as most of Ms Cusick's stories are. Particularly young readers might find it hard to keep their attention on the book - while I started reading Point Horror at 8 or 9, I preferred Stine and Hoh and didn't really appreciate the subtlety of Cusick until I was 13 or 14.

The only thing I wasn't keen on with this book was the way Robin treated Parker. She really seemed to dislike him, and we were never given any concrete reason why. Oh, she thought he was arrogant, and he was, but he was always nice to her, and I'd have liked to see a couple of scenes that let them get closer together. Cusick writes her romantic - or sometimes just creature comfort - scenes in such a beautiful way that my heart feels all prickly during them, and I'd like to have seen more of them here.

Or maybe just more Parker. Parker was hot. I do have a thing for those arrogant-but-good-hearted blonds. :)

Verdict: Nice juxtaposition of the chilling and the comforting. A wonderfully twisted read.

Rob Mawer says

Point Horrors are always good for a quick burner to top up the yearly Reading Challenge. Help Wanted does embody the definition of a good point horror, but I always finish them thinking they'd be better as a screen play, so as to end up with the inevitable Netflix Original series...this aside I enjoyed the story, and the characters had their macabre based personalities ranging from demented janitors to high school jocks. Wouldn't mind the library and crackling fireplace myself...moved up to 4 stars on this basis. Not bad Cusick...not bad.

Michaela says

This is my favourite Point Horror book. Robin Bailey takes a part-time job working for Herk Swanson, an old man with plenty of family secrets. His grandson Parker is the light of his life and the misery of Robin's. Parker's waif-like stepsister Claudia is fragile and Robin feels sorry for her. But Robin should maybe be a

little bit more careful when deciding who to trust.

Alex says

I keep saying this, but I am just so thrilled that my library has a bunch of these teen horror classics available to check out as e-books, since they purged all the hard copies. (Now, if only they would get e-books from *Fear Street*, *Terror Academy* and *Nightmare Hall*!)

I remembered the cover of this book vividly, but the actual story itself not so much. I still think Richie Tankersley Cusick is the most talented writer from this genre, and I really enjoyed reading this. I didn't remember anything about the ending, and I thought all the twists and turns were great.

I can't wait to read more of these! I'm having such a blast with these trips down memory lane.

Leah says

Rating: 4 of 5

Help Wanted was among the many *Point Horror* books I read in the early 90s, between the ages of 12 to 15. In those days, when I wasn't buried in a Stephen King novel, nine times out of ten I was reading L.J. Smith, R.L. Stine, Christopher Pike, Caroline B. Cooney, or Richie Tankersley Cusick. Their novels always thrilled and entertained, and yes, there was a healthy dose of jumps and creepies.

Nowadays, I'd recommend the *Point Horror* books for younger 12- to 15-year-olds, who want to dip their pinkie toe in the horror pool. (These books will likely fall short for anyone who's already dabbled in adult dark fiction or film.) The horror elements are mild, for the most part, and some of the teenager-y behavior may seem a little outdated. But other than that, these are great fun!

Note: My rating is based on what I remember from 20+ years ago and, of course, includes a fair share of sentimentality.
