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# How To Hang A Witch



## Synopsis

The #1 New York Times bestseller! It's the Salem Witch Trials meets Mean Girls in this New York Times bestselling novel from one of the descendants of Cotton Mather, where the trials of high school start to feel like a modern-day witch hunt for a teen with all the wrong connections to Salem's past. Salem, Massachusetts, is the site of the infamous witch trials and the new home of Samantha Mather. Recently transplanted from New York City, Sam and her stepmother are not exactly welcomed with open arms. Sam is the descendant of Cotton Mather, one of the men responsible for those trials—and almost immediately, she becomes the enemy of a group of girls who call themselves the Descendants. And guess who their ancestors were? If dealing with that weren't enough, Sam also comes face to face with a real, live (well, technically dead) ghost. A handsome, angry ghost who wants Sam to stop touching his stuff. But soon Sam discovers she is at the center of a centuries-old curse affecting anyone with ties to the trials. Sam must come to terms with the ghost and find a way to work with the Descendants to stop a deadly cycle that has been going on since the first accused witch was hanged. If any town should have learned its lesson, it's Salem. But history may be about to repeat itself. It's like Mean Girls meets history class in the best possible way. • "Seventeen Magazine" Mather shines a light on the lessons the Salem Witch Trials can teach us about modern-day bullying—and what we can do about it. • "Bustle.com" Strikes a careful balance of creepy, fun, and thoughtful. • "NPR" I am utterly addicted to Mather's electric debut. It keeps you on the edge of your seat, twisting and turning with ghosts, witches, an ancient curse, and a sigh of romance. It's beautiful. Haunting. The characters are vivid and real. • I. Could. Not. Put. It. Down. • "Jennifer Niven, bestselling author of All the Bright Places"

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

The book description says the book is the "Salem Witch Trials meets Mean Girls." It's one thing when friends or reviews describe a book as a mash-up, but when it's in the book description itself, I get a little skeptical. But Mean Girls is a viciously funny movie ("Raise your hand if you have ever been personally victimized by Regina George"), and I've been intrigued by the Salem Witch trials for most of my life. It comes with the territory when growing up less than an hour away from Salem. I've visited Salem several times, and I've both been in and directed the play The Crucible. But it was the added info that author Adriana Mather is a direct descendant of someone involved in the witch trials that made the prospect of reading the book even more intriguing. Would she make the book be all the things "funny, biting, satirical, and spooky" implied in that mash-up? Absolutely! The story starts with Samantha Mather "a direct descendant (like the author) of Cotton Mather, a minister who supported the witch trials" moving from New York to Salem with her stepmother while her father is hospitalized in a coma. She moves into the old house where her father grew up, a place where strange, ghostly things start happening. In school the next day, her last name alone attracts negative attention among other students, particularly a collection of four girls and a boy known as the Descendants. Their family trees include ancestors who were accused, tried, and hanged as witches back in 1692. No wonder they don't like Samantha. She gets bullied, and as a teacher, I was slightly put off by how the school population (students and teachers) is somewhat complicit in the bullying. The school administration and her stepmother chalk it up to Sam's somewhat troubled past. But this is fiction, and as the plot got more mysterious, spooky, gripping, and scathing, it bothered me less because there's a really powerful and important message buried inside the intricate, twisty plot. But before I get to that message, I want to talk about the characters and plot. Sam is a great narrator. She's smart, snarky, and

stubborn. She lacks some self-confidence because of all that's happened to her, but she's also got a strong sense of what's right and wrong. As her situation at school gets worse, and she is ultimately accused of being responsible for some freaky and dangerous things happening at the town, all she wants to do is help everyone by solving the problem—a curse on the descendants (including herself) of those involved in the witch trials. The supporting cast is also well-developed. I like that the Descendants have distinct voices and personalities, and Susannah's the first to reach out to Sam—was my favorite of that bunch. As in many YA books, there's a kind of love triangle with Sam and two boys: sweet, noble neighbor Jaxon and proper, mysterious Elijah. I only loosely consider it a triangle, and it was never a distraction, but it was quite the contrary, as both relationships were different, unique, strong and necessary to the story. There are at least two big mysteries, and it was fun watching them converge and diverge throughout the plot. The stakes are clearly raised through the book, and though I sniffed out the ultimate villain, that villain's true motivations surprised me. I didn't want to put the book down when I had to, particularly through the climactic confrontation. What elevates this book toward best of 2016 status is the message. Sam is trying to stop a curse that has been repeating itself in Salem since the witch trials, but the unsubstantiated finger-pointing that occurred then has repeated far too many times in history. Whether it was the "Red Scare" of McCarthyism in the 1950s (the inspiration for Arthur Miller's *The Crucible*) or the profiling of different ethnicities in many eras of history including the present, the hysteria is unnecessary. And it happens in high school also if one "popular" group of students socially banish others for no reason other than they're different. Even without witchcraft, this happens, and hopefully well-written books like this can help point out why that's dangerous while doing so with an enjoyable story too. This book exceeded my expectations, especially after reading a few books that didn't. Maybe my reading dry spell was a curse, finally broken by *How to Hang a Witch* and its FIVE STAR rating.

Loved, loved, loved this book. I usually buy books in my native language and have a hard time finding english books that I enjoy, so finding one is always exciting. I preordered this book after seeing the video trailer and thought it looked interesting. I love the paranormal and have always been interested in the Salem witch trials. I fell in love with the characters, I was rooting for Sam and Elijah. I tried guessing the end like I do with any other mystery novel and I have to say that the book did a good job at keeping you guessing. I enjoyed that the author who herself has an ancestor involved in the witch trials used historical accurate information in the novel. I received this book the

day it was released and as soon as I got home started reading, I stayed up until 4 am to finish it. Could not put it down. Recommended for sure!

**\*\*Review originally posted on My Fangirl Chronicles\*\***As you may or may not know, one of my current work-in-progress is an urban fantasy novel that involves witches, so when I heard about this book a few weeks before Adriana's joint signing at Chevalier's Bookstore with Charlotte Huang and my friend Julie Buxbaum, I already knew I had to read it. They were definitely not exaggerating when they marketed *How To Hang A Witch* as *the Salem Witch Trials meets Mean Girls* because that is exactly how I would describe the book. But it was also a lot creepier than I was expecting! There were several times where I got the chills while reading this book (and listening to the audio), but it was also just so fascinating! But probably the coolest and most unique thing about this book is that the author, Adriana Mather, is a direct descendant from one of the major figures in the Salem Witch trials! How insane is that!? I haven't really read a historical fiction before (I have a slight aversion to anything related to history because I disliked that class in high school) but this book had a slight historical contemporary feel to it. Surprisingly, however, I really didn't mind! In fact, I was enthralled with the rich history contained in this book. I have never been to Salem or have really considered going there until I met Adriana and read her book. The rich and creepy history of Salem that she displayed in her book really caught my interest, and the fact that witchcraft and magic isn't as far-fetched over there as it is in here in California. While reading I really felt as if I were in Salem because I could picture everything so vividly. That kind of proved to be a problem when all the creepy stuff was happening. The main character is Samantha Mather and, like the author, is a direct descendant of Cotton Mather. I could relate to Sam in a lot of ways and often found myself sympathizing with her. Like Sam, I was bullied by a group of mean girls in school, felt/was alone in a new and unfamiliar school setting, and had trouble trusting people, particularly guys. Despite going through all this "in addition to her dad being in the hospital and having to deal with some scary witchcraft" Sam stays strong and focused on her goals. She's tenacious, persistent, brave, and would do anything for loved ones. I also admired Sam's sarcasm and sass. In short, she reminded me a lot of, well, me! In case you were wondering, yes, there is a love-triangle in this story. But before you go rolling your eyes and dismissing this book completely, I think you should give it a chance and read it first. Just because there's a love-triangle doesn't always mean the story isn't worth a read. It's not even the main conflict in this book, which I was very grateful for. I also actually really liked both guys, but of course,

as with all love-triangles IÃ¢ÂÂve come across, IÃ¢ÂÂve chosen a side. Haha At times it did get a little cheesy but I found it sweet, adorable, and entertaining. The main antagonist was a bit predictable but the creepiness-factor and badassery of the showdown at the climax of the book made up for it. At that point in the story, I was on the edge of my seat and could not put it down until the end! But then it got past the climax and then I was just sad and my heart hurt for the characters. YouÃ¢ÂÂll see why when you read it! I canÃ¢ÂÂt wait for the next book, Haunting the Deep! ItÃ¢ÂÂs related to the Titanic and I have been obsessed with anything related to that since I was a little girl and I watched the movie. It releases October 3, 2017!

I enjoyed this book very much. I love that the author even has the "Mather" name! I loved watching Salem when it was on TV and this book was nothing like the TV show. This book has a new fresh twist on things. I enjoyed all the "Mean Girls" and I can't wait to hopefully meet the "Dad" and learn more about him in the next book. I was sad there he was in the hospital through all of this book and we really did not get to know him since Samantha talked so highly of him in this book. I was hoping we could "meet" him. I felt Samantha's pain about her dad in the whole book. I can't wait to read more from this author!

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