



BOOK REVIEW

Book Title	Ghost Electricity
Author	Sean Cunningham
Date	April 2019
Stars	

This is a story Joss Whedon might have written if he had been part Australian, part British.

It's got vampires, werewolves and monsters of all kinds and The Big Bad is something ghoulish, mega-powerful and not-of-this-world. Our plucky protagonists may have the same qualities as Buffy, resourceful, determined and with their own Scooby gang, but it looks like the nefarious beings are going to be just too big and bad.

The author maintains his story *'blends fast-paced action, vivid characters and epic adventures in modern London.'* He is not wrong in that description and it's why I loved this book. It is relentless in its pace, no mean achievement considering the amount of world building that goes on in it. Yes, it's primarily set in London, evoked wonderfully too. But, like all good urban fantasy, we are in a world where there's much more happening in the shadows and in the social make-up of this city.

This is the first book in the Hawthorn House series so the world building and its characters requires lots of seeds to be sown. I found this to be a little confusing at the outset, the story is told through multiple PoVs and keeping track of everything wasn't easy. It's not a story to put down and leave for a day or two – but to be honest – you won't want to. Too much is happening as the threat level ramps up chapter by chapter.

The writing style is relaxed, easy to follow and that makes it so much easier to take everything in. It sits in the background, occasionally making itself known - like a demon in the shadows. I referenced Joss Whedon earlier because of the humour, it's wry, slightly sarcastic at times, laconic too. Dialogue sparkles and left me with a grin on my face.

Characters might appear, on the surface, to be archetypes in the first act but don't let this mislead you. The traditional tropes are cracked wide open here. Our protagonist werewolf turns out to be something more than that – there's another Whedon twist here which I loved! (Probably the best part!) We have three female characters who are different takes on the Buffy model. One is a ten-year-old technological genius who admonishes herself at the end when she says, "I screamed like a little girl. Like a little *damned* girl!"

Another young woman undertakes her own dream walks, resonating with the journeys of self-discovery seen in the aboriginal cultures of North America and Australia. I mention this as an illustration of the inventiveness of the author's imagination. It should serve to show that this story goes way beyond Joss Whedon's Buffy in some ways but does so with a casual nod of affection.