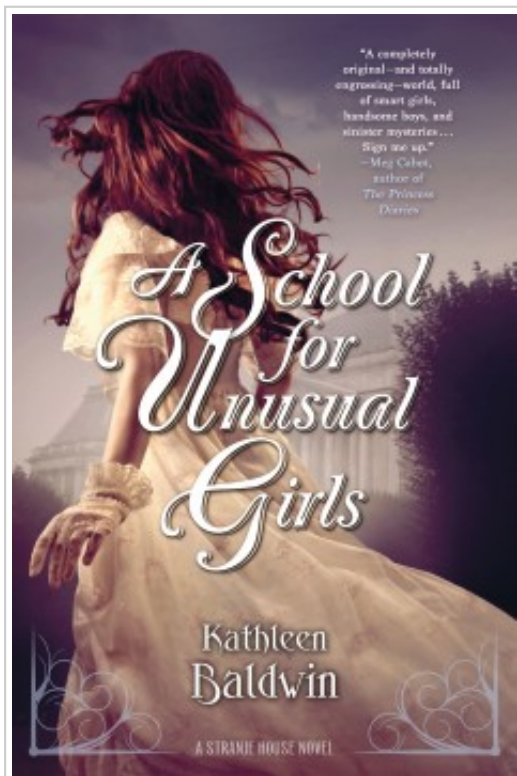


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## A School for Unusual Girls

by Kathleen Baldwin

**Price: \$17.99**(Hardcover)

Published: May 19, 2015

Rating: 0.0/5 (0 votes cast)

### From the Publisher:

A School for Unusual Girls is the first captivating installment in the Stranje House series for young adults by award-winning author Kathleen Baldwin. #1 New York Times bestselling author Meg Cabot calls this romantic Regency adventure “completely original and totally engrossing.”

It's 1814. Napoleon is exiled on Elba. Europe is in shambles. Britain is at war on four fronts. And Stranje House, a School for Unusual Girls, has become one of Regency England's dark little secrets. The daughters of the beau monde who don't fit high society's constrictive mold are banished to Stranje House to be reformed into marriageable young ladies. Or so their parents think. In truth, Headmistress Emma Stranje, the original unusual girl, has plans for the young ladies—plans that entangle the girls in the dangerous world of...

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## What We Say

A frustrating introduction to a new series with a clever premise. The School For Unusual Girls is in fact a training school for spies. But the young women aren't recruited; they're dumped there by indifferent parents who believe the school is in fact a viciously effective final desperate measure. So when Georgina Fitzwilliam burns down her parents' horse stable with yet another foolish scientific experiment, they coldly drop her there, washing their hands of a willful child with a mind of her own that simply won't fit in. Georgina herself believes the school will turn to torture in order to make her a "proper" young lady. But in fact the school plans to encourage her talents while ALSO teaching her to blend in with society so Georgina can serve her country as a spy and scientist. Sounds fun, no? Unfortunately, this opener has numerous problems. One, there's precious little training that goes on: Georgina shows up, invents a new undetectable invisible ink that might just save her country in 48 hours ("It can't be done!" "I've done it!") and is off on an assignment before you blink an eye. Also, dashes of mild, unnecessary magic (like other students who have visions, commune with animals and so on) is both intrusively present but not developed enough to actually feel germane. Finally, romance is rather obviously handled, with Georgina and a beau inevitably frustrated by and drawn to each other within one minute of meeting. This would all be forgettable in other hands. But author Kathleen Baldwin has a deft hand and one has the sense she really could deliver a corker of a novel with more discipline, more focus and less lazy plotting. (I really dislike period novels in which characters prematurely invent flying gliders or machines just as an easy way to achieve a goal.) Baldwin can dash off readable pages; here's hoping any success this has pushes her to aim higher next time. -- Michael Giltz

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## What Others Say

"A School for Unusual Girls sucked me in from the first few pages and kept me reading until late into the night. Kathleen Baldwin has created a completely original—and totally engrossing—world, full of smart girls, handsome boys, and sinister mysteries. Who wouldn't want to enroll?" —Meg Cabot, bestselling author of *The Princess Diaries*

"Spellbinding! A School for Unusual Girls is a beautifully written tale of adventure, intrigue, and romance that will appeal to every girl who has ever felt different.... A true page-turner!" —Rachel Hawthorne, NYT and USA Today bestselling author of *Trouble from the Start*

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