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The Black Witch: An Epic Fantasy Novel (The Black Witch Chronicles)



Synopsis

Critics are raving about Laurie Forest's incredible debut, *The Black Witch*: "Elloren learns to question authority and Gardnerian history, while developing real empathy for different races and species. Forest uses a richly imagined magical world to offer an uncompromising condemnation of prejudice and injustice." —Booklist, starred review "Exquisite character work, an elaborate mythology, and a spectacularly rendered universe make this a noteworthy debut, which argues passionately against fascism and xenophobia." —Publishers Weekly, starred review "This briskly paced, tightly plotted novel enacts the transformative power of education, creating engaging characters set in a rich alternative universe with a complicated history that can help us better understand our own." —Kirkus Reviews, starred review A new *Black Witch* will rise—her powers vast beyond imagining. Elloren Gardner is the granddaughter of the last prophesied Black Witch, Carnissa Gardner, who drove back the enemy forces and saved the Gardnerian people during the Realm War. But while she is the absolute spitting image of her famous grandmother, Elloren is utterly devoid of power in a society that prizes magical ability above all else. When she is granted the opportunity to pursue her lifelong dream of becoming an apothecary, Elloren joins her brothers at the prestigious Verpax University to embrace a destiny of her own, free from the shadow of her grandmother's legacy. But she soon realizes that the university, which admits all manner of people—including the fire-wielding, winged Icarals, the sworn enemies of all Gardnerians—is a treacherous place for the granddaughter of the Black Witch. As evil looms on the horizon and the pressure to live up to her heritage builds, everything Elloren thought she knew will be challenged and torn away. Her best hope of survival may be among the most unlikely band of misfits—if only she can find the courage to trust those she's been taught to hate and fear.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I fell in love with the world building in this book...the beautiful setting, the depth and variety of characters, the complexity of the relationships, and how amazing it is to see the progression of Elloren's growth--and that was an important part to me. Their violent history and racial divides set up a complicated backdrop to this coming-of-age story. It was hard not to empathize and draw comparisons to reality, but with Elloren's resilience and steadfastness, you can't help but feel hopeful and have faith in people. I'm still thinking about these characters thirteen hours later, and all I want to do is grab a cup of tea and delve right back into the book. I rarely want to reread a story, but the richness of this one has me thinking I had to have missed something the first time through. Well, that's the excuse I'll be using to reread it anyway...not that I need one ;) Book 2 cannot come fast enough!

I was especially interested in checking out this book after seeing it unfairly trashed on Goodreads, mostly by people who haven't read it. Are there racist themes in this book? Yes. But people are acting like this book is a hate crime, and they're completely missing the point. Fiction is supposed to make you uncomfortable at times, and your characters need room to grow. The story revolves around a naive (but flawed) Elloren, whose harsh opinions of other races are the product of how she was raised. As the descendant of a famous witch, 17-year-old Elloren escapes marriage (or rather, the "wandfasting" ritual) and attends university instead, where she encounters many fantastical races. Obvious comparisons will be made to Harry Potter, but the world in "The Black Witch" felt totally unique to me. While it's not quite as addictive as Harry Potter, I thought it was imaginative and thrilling. Harry Potter was not without its share of prejudice either. Had it been published on 2017, would readers be offended by "mudblood?" One of the complaints about this book was the

use of the word "half-breed" to describe certain races. I'm a mixed race reader, but I saw no reason to be offended. It was just the harsh reality of Elloren's world. All in all, I thought it was an enjoyable magical adventure. While it's not without its flaws, if you keep an open mind, the dialogue and world-building really pull you in. I look forward to reading the author's next work.

If fantasy is your cup of tea this isn't any old crappy cup of Liptons. Break out your best biscuits, McVities with the caramel and chocolate. The only problem with this story is that you will gulp it down too quickly and be left aghast, holding an empty cup and wanting more!

I read a lot, usually a book a day, so when I say that I really enjoyed this book far above other's it's quite a compliment. I started reading this book at 9 PM and it was after 3 AM before I could put the book down and go to bed. I am anxiously waiting for the next book in the series.

After generations of subjugation and enslavement by the Urisk and Kelts, the Gardnerians, by the strength of their dark horse champion, the Black Witch herself, overthrew their masters and became the great power in the region. And in fifteen short years became the subjugators and enslavers in their turn. Elloren's parents died in that war; she's grown up in an increasingly powerful and religiously orthodox Gardneria. Which is where our story begins. Their xenophobia, dogma, and intolerance is all Elloren has ever known...Until she goes to a foreign university and encounters others: Kelts and Urisk to be sure, but also Lupines (werewolves) and Elves, even Icarals, the dreaded winged-people. And ideas. Ideas different from and threatening to the culture she grew up in. Ideas that gradually teach her to see the world for how it truly is. The Black Witch is an astonishingly quick read for 601 pages because it's so artfully well-written, a true page-turner! And the messages of overcoming bigotry, embracing diversity, and standing up to injustice however it presents itself, are vital ones for tweens, teens and adults of all persuasions. I wholeheartedly and unabashedly recommend The Black Witch for everybody!

The Black Witch By Laurie Forest What it's all about... This book is about Elloran and the idea that she must be the next Black Witch because her grandmother was a Black Witch. Elloran has spent her life in the country living a simple protected life under the care of her Uncle. She loves playing the violin, she is quiet and reserved and loves her simple life. However her Aunt sweeps in and whisks her off to the city and to the University. At School she encounters all kinds of different creatures...faes, selkies, vulpines, icarels, mean girls and tons more. Her country and people are

divided and there is much cruelty. Elloran can't bear the cruelty and begins to quietly defy authority. Why I wanted to read it... This was a big bold fantasy that I loved reading from the beginning. The world building was magnificent. I loved the characters, loved their vivid situations and was never bored or lost for a moment. This world made sense to me. Elloran and other characters were real and special. They were trying to make their world a much better place. What made me truly enjoy this book... Everything about this book was beautiful to me... even the many sad parts. The cruelty to the dragons, the prejudices... all felt so real... my heart broke as I read about them. I think that this book will be a lovely trilogy and I can't wait for the next book! I loved this book as much as if not more than Harry Potter and A Discovery Of Witches. This book is incredibly amazing! Why you should read it, too... Readers who love this kind of fantasy will love this book!

Did I say that I loved this book? I love the atmosphere, which is achieved without a lot of unnecessary detail. The characters are very well developed, the storyline is fascinating. I hated to go to sleep at night while reading it, I literally didn't want to put it down. I do not say that about many books lately.

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