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Schooled In Magic



Synopsis

Emily is a teenage girl pulled from our world into a world of magic and mystery by a necromancer who intends to sacrifice her to the dark gods. Rescued in the nick of time by an enigmatic sorcerer, she discovers that she possesses magical powers and must go to Whitehall School to learn how to master them. There, she learns that the locals believe she is a "Child of Destiny" - someone whose choices might save or damn their world, a title that earns her both friends and enemies. A stranger in a very strange land, she may never fit in to her new world, and the necromancer is still hunting her. If Emily can't stop him, he might bring about the end of days.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Spoiler alert: this review will reveal some details of what happens in this and the next book. I read this book and is half way through the next, so it's not that bad. It's a good story with a lot of interesting twists, lighthearted and straight forwards. Christopher Nutall is the author of other books I have enjoyed, and I looked forwards to another not too complex, amusing story. However, the author uses the main character to moralise about fantasy writing. One of his pet peeves is apparently how unrealistic fantasy writing is, as the heroine in her inner monologue keeps comparing the fantasy literature to the experiences she has in the new world. At the same time the author has the heroine introduce concepts which the world lacks fundamental infrastructure to support, such as changing the accounting system in a year to the point of ruining a whole guild by introducing arabic numbers, and in the same period of time creating "broadsheets" in a society where illiteracy was the rule, and

reading a marker for social superiority. Now, the heroine is young and pretty uneducated - which makes it miraculous that she knows the formula for steel by heart - so it may not be a surprise that she has no qualms about introducing the steam engine to a society where they apparently aren't even using coal. Deforestation and pollution may not be a big concern for her, although she does question the wisdom of teaching the magicians to split atoms. But it might have been expected of an author who chooses to write quite a bit of moralising into the story through the comparisons to our-earth early history, that he should at least be a bit more gentle in the heavy-handed application of "the west is right, also in different worlds.

This book has everything that I liked about A Life Less Ordinary but also everything I felt was missing and really none of that book's faults. Of course, as soon as magic schools are on the menu the comparisons with Harry Potter comes flying like snowflakes in a winter storm. Well, if I should pick one of the two I would probably pick this book. This book is more hardcore action-fantasy and somewhat less childish than the Harry Potter books however I have to confess that, although I bought them all, I have only read the first three of the Potter ones yet. As the blurb states, Emily is drawn into a magic world against her will and not only does she discover that magic exists, as well as various things that go bump in the night, but there is no way back. She is stuck in a medieval world with lots of wonders but also no smartphones, computers or other modern conveniences (including sanitary ones) that we take for granted today. The fact that Emily really leaves the modern world behind makes me classify this book as Fantasy rather than Urban-Fantasy. Apart from the main bad guy Emily also has to deal with understanding her new world as well as the everyday school life which of course includes friends, studies and the obligatory school bully. Although the book starts quite quickly by throwing Emily and the reader in deep waters right from the start it then continues without rushing it. It follows a logical thread and takes the time it needs to develop Emily, let her go through her classes, learn how to handle magic etc. I find it quite disappointing when books rush over these parts just to throw some more action at the reader. This book gets it right.

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