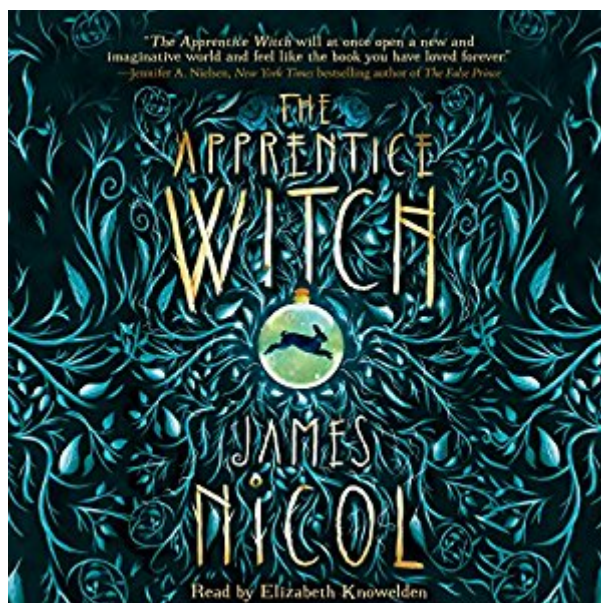


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The Apprentice Witch



Synopsis

A special middle grade debut of magic and courage in a world of witches, written with the charm and enchantment of books like *Circus Mirandus* and *The Apothecary*. Will Arianwyn ever become a real witch? Arianwyn has flunked her witch's assessment. She knows she's doomed. Declared an apprentice and sent to the town of Lull in disgrace, Arianwyn may never become a real witch like everyone else - much to the glee of her archrival, Gimma. But the remote Lull is not as boring as it seems. Strange things are being sighted in the woods, and a dangerous infestation of hex creeps throughout the town. Then the worst thing Arianwyn can imagine arrives in Lull: Gimma turns up on vacation determined to make her life miserable. Despite being a little over her head, Arianwyn starts to get the hang of being a witch, even if she's only an apprentice. But there's one thing she's wrong about: The worst is still to come. For a mysterious darkness has begun to haunt her spells, and there may be much more at stake than just her pride....

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I was completely charmed by Arianwyn (and Bob!) and can't wait for the second book so I can read more of her adventures!

The *Apprentice Witch* introduces us to young Arianwyn who has made it through a lonely education in witchcraft to find herself flunking her witch's assessment exam. Wyn's grandmother is one of the highly ranked witches and confident in Wyn's powers, so Wyn is given a bronze badge and sent to the remote town of Lull as her first assignment as an *Apprentice Witch*. Once there, Wyn shows signs of unusual ability and an affinity with magical creatures. Rare, magical creatures - many

believed to be imaginary - appear and are won over by her. As Wyn slowly makes friends and proves her ability, she must deal with the animosity of the local Mayor who seems both scared of magic and impatient with Wyn's abilities. When Wyn's nemesis Ginny shows up as the honored guest and niece of the Mayor, Wyn is forced to work with Ginny on assignments. Ginny seems changed and magically incompetent. Wyn's natural kindness leads to a possible error in judgement and the potential loss of her posting. Though Wyn lives in a world of magic, she is very much relatable, her concerns and fears are like those of young girls her age. James Nicol has made a fascinating world of magic and Wyn is likable, fun, and I hope to learn more about her adventures. Looking forward to the next in the series!

The CWA (Civil Witchcraft Authority) is conducting evaluations of apprentice witches to see whom amongst them will be awarded a shining silver star signifying their status as full-fledged witches. Arianwyn Gribble has sneaked out of the apartment she shares with her Grandmother to report for her evaluation. Things don't go quite as she hoped, and when she is given a bronze moon brooch instead of the silver star, she is just devastated. Her country is in desperate need of witches though, and so Arianwyn Gribble, Apprentice Witch, soon finds herself posted to the town of Lull. Lull lies in the southernmost part of the country, right at the edge of the Great Wood. A delightful fantasy story for middle grade readers that transports you to a whole other world. The plot moves along at a nice pace and there are plenty of interesting characters to capture the imagination. There is no lack of action either. The main protagonist is well developed and an outstanding character. She's quick thinking, brave, kind-hearted and a true and loyal friend. This would also make a great read aloud book for parents or teachers. There are a lot of topics for discussion like bullying, lying and friendship. Young readers will definitely be hooked by this magical tale.

This is an enjoyable read, and not just for youngsters. It would be difficult not to root for Arianwyn, an apprentice witch who "fails" a test to become a full-fledged witch and thinks her life is ruined. But all is not over for her. The reader senses from the beginning that there is something special about this young girl -- something that might not slot her into the "typical witch" space, but yet sets her apart in a good and powerful way. When the book opens, Arianwyn is nervously awaiting her test to become a witch. When she fails it, her grandmother, a powerful witch, intercedes with the powers that be and gets her assigned to Lull, a remote town at the edge of the mysterious and scary Great Wood. And from the time that the young apprentice journeys to Lull, frightening things happen. A

crawler -- a large and vicious demon -- emerges from the woods and attacks her, another girl and the driver of their bus on the way to the town. And other strange things happen once she arrives. Soon she's fighting the powers of darkness, using what spells she can. It's called getting thrown into the deep end without a life vest. This is a fun book with some similarities to the Harry Potter series, but it's definitely its own story. Arianwyn is an appealing character who I think deserves a sequel.

I enjoyed this book. It has good morals and it was quite imaginative. If there were a sequel, I would read it as well. It was an easy, fun read that was easy to put down during the first half, but I always looked forward to reading it again. The second half had more action and the story developed faster and better, and I didn't put it down at all once I hit about half way mark. At the end, I found I wanted the story to continue, so I would say it had an accelerating appeal to it. I think any fans of magical fantasy would like it. Witches are definitely the good guys in the book, and I love that there is never any doubt about that. In the world of the book, witches are there to help humans against dark spirits. Humans easily accept witches as they would doctors, and in much the same way, thought witches have a bit of 'celebrity appeal' to them. Our heroine, Arianwynn is eager to take her place in this world, but unfortunately, her test doesn't go quite as planned. She is sent to the town of Lull to further hone her craft and help with the everyday nuisance creatures that plague the human world. She's embarrassed and ashamed of flunking, and her self-confidence leaves much to be desired. After much struggle, she seems about to come into her own when her witch-school nemesis arrives to throw a wrench into the life she's started making there in Lull. One thing I really loved about this book was that it has a sub-theme of magic creatures and light spirits. Arianwynn seems to love to help the ones in need, even though at times they might hurt her. The author makes them seem quite amazing and at times I started wondering what toys from this book might look like. I think I would have liked a playset from this book when I was younger. Maybe even now. The ending is neat and tidy, but there was still a lot of material in the book that was undeveloped, intriguing tidbits touched upon but never explored or explained, so sequels could hopefully shoot off from some of those real characters or backstory pieces. It's a good book for kids, but I think adult fans of witch stories will like it too. I didn't find it anything like Harry Potter, but I do think fans of that series would enjoy this one.

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