



The Spirit of a Witch

Sarah Jane Ivory

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Ever wondered what it would be like to truly understand a cat, every last meow, every narrowed glance, every jab of a paw?

When Briley Forester, a shy recluse and gifted games programmer, is torn from the world and dumped into the village of Maepole, she finds out the hard way. Trapped within a backward world without technology, she discovers that being a witch is hard, and that her grouchy talking cat Smokey knows more about men than she does!

Tricked into working as a delivery girl and aided by an ancient grimoire, only by learning the powers of witchcraft can she hope to return home. Not an easy task for a girl suffering from crippling self-doubt.

But her way home is fraught with heartache and danger, love and despair. The powerful Whitehead family, haters of witches, will stop at nothing to be rid of her.

And lurking within the forest, the dark spirit lies in wait, ready to strike...

The Spirit of a Witch Details

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From Reader Review The Spirit of a Witch for online ebook

Jen Ponce says

What would my cat have to talk about with me, if I could understand what he was saying? Briley, star of The Spirit of a Witch gets to find out when she's transported from Earth to another world by mages. She makes some strange choices on her journey but I know not every character would be able to set off on their own rather than pledge to be a slave in order to survive.

During the course of the story, Briley learns that she's a witch and she's able to see a grimoire owned by another witch, Branwen. Seeing magic books is something only witches can do, which is a cool take on the story. Another tantalizing teaser is the hinted at correlation between programming and witchcraft.

Briley likes mint tea and it's through her passion that she's able to start fitting in to the village. She has ups and downs throughout her journey but ultimately learns how to live in and deal with the people who live there. There are parts where she's extraordinarily down on herself. This negative self-talk is always conquered by Briley and I liked how she was able to think through these moments of depression. It was a good message that even in the darkest places light can be found.
A good, fun read that I enjoyed very much.

Thanks to the author for the story! :)

Tamara! aka AmyG.Dala says

Had fun with this, found the time travel interesting, the cat hilariously cat like, and enjoyed all the town folk with their quirks and personalities, some likable, some not so likable but liked anyway and over all thought this was a nice read.

Stuart Aken says

This book came to me as a prize in a raffle at a the Fantasticon 2015 fantasy convention in Hull. I doubt I would've come across it otherwise and don't think I'd have read it. The novel is clearly aimed at young women and I suspect that many of them, especially cat lovers, will enjoy it.

The central character, Briley, is a young woman with a troubled background and an understandable tendency to moan and be overly critical of herself: not a surprising trait, given the way society often treats young women. She has a companion, Smokey, her cat, who she treats as her best friend. I enjoyed the snarky nature of the creature as it comments on her actions and converses with her once she's been thrust unwillingly into the life of a witch.

This fantasy tale has a good story and the central idea of an individual magicked into another world works quite well. But there is a good deal of repetition and several instances of misused words, as if the author has consulted a thesaurus without fully understanding the actual meaning of the chosen suggestions.

For all that, I read the book to the end and I don't do that if I'm not engaged. Briley, irritating and sometimes self-pitying as she is, did manage to hold my attention throughout the book. I had some sympathy for her and wondered what would happen.

This is the first in a series and, unlike many modern sets, this one does actually contain a fully formed story with beginning, middle and end and can be read as a standalone book. So, top marks to the author for that. I won't, however, be reading the sequels.

Many cat lovers and young women who enjoy their fantasy with romantic but non-erotic content will find this book satisfying. And there is a well told story here.

This reviewer has taken the True Review Pledge.

Christy King says

A debut novel by an up-and-coming writer. A light and fun read with an alternate take on witchcraft. In this world, witches can only use their powers in an alternate reality.

Briley is uncomfortable and socially inept in our modern world, because she is meant for greater things elsewhere. As she stumbles through growing pains, she gains confidence in herself by the end. Her new community needs her and she rises to the challenge.

A talking cat named Smokey serves as a mentor and comedic foil. A beloved character for the series.

I would recommend this series to anyone looking for a fun and light read. I have already obtained all the other books available by this author and I can't wait to see what happens!

M.A. Ray says

This book was an excellent debut. I wasn't expecting it to be a portal fantasy, so that element was a nice surprise for me. Though the main character, Briley, is sometimes a little frustrating (she tends to whine), she was a well-characterized portrait of depression, and as the book progresses she grows personally into a self-sacrificing hero. Smokey the cat was enchanting throughout. Despite a few editing hiccups in my edition, which I've been advised are now fixed, definitely worth the time.

If you're looking for a light, fun read, give this a try. Recommended for fans of fairy tales, those who enjoy the idea of going to another world, and most definitely cat lovers!

Mark Lewis says

I have found a new favorite author! Her name is Sarah Jane Avory.

This book was a rollercoaster ride like none other.

Dj Acrey says

I really liked the story but,,

I felt that the main character really beat herself up way too often and way too bad, are there really people that think that horrible about themselves with no outside forces encouraging it ?
But I did enjoy the story line a lot.

S. Usher Evans says

I adored this book (or books, as I forgot I had purchased the combined books 1 and 2 that is Volume 1. Full disclosure: I kept wondering why the story hadn't ended yet...)

Briley is a character I can absolutely related to - a nerdy computer programmer who is awkward and introverted. She's also got a lot of issues with self-doubt stemming from her ability to always blame herself for everything that goes wrong.

And then she gets transported to another world! And, oh yeah - she's a witch. And her cat talks to her.

The first book focused on Briley's inclusion into this new fantasy world. There's a sickness going around, and Briley's newfangled ideas of boiling water to kill E. Coli suddenly make the witch a hero (hooray for modern science!). But not to everyone; there's a rotten Malfoy-esque family who hates witches and witchcraft. And they just keep popping up to threaten and annoy her.

I had a couple quibbles with the writing style - I felt like there were times when Ivory repeated the same sentiment over and over again. "Oh, what are you doing?" "Nothing." "Oh, witchy stuff." "Smiles." happened as many times as I had the thought "Okay, we get it." I also was confused with Sebastian thing - but that had more to do with the break between the two books that went over my head. At times, it read like a really good young adult book (not a bad thing!) but then we got hints of more erotic that pushed it into the adult/new adult territory. I wasn't terribly sure that it was necessary, as I didn't feel it added anything to the story.

I would definitely recommend this book to fans of fantasy, mature young adult readers, and anyone looking for a place to call home.

Leticia says

I found this book lots of fun. The protagonist reminded me a bit of detective Monk. Briley is a different kind of hero, refreshing and fun due to being most of the time humanly uncertain, almost until the last minute, when her ingenuity saves the day. I also loved Smokey because he really sounded like a cat. I recommend this book to anyone who likes fantasy stories with witches. And to anyone who understands how great is to befriend a cat.

Shelley Manner says

Loved the book although I did find some time related things misplaced; such as,using the word "neat".

June Ahern says

I really don't read too often, fantasy but liked "The Spirit of a Witch" by Sarah Jane Avory's debut novel - a fun story from the beginning. I liked the silliness, Smokey, the cat who is as fed-up with Briley, the main character and often is short with her as he meows his wisdom.

Briley's life has become unhappy - so many games that people play. Poof! Briley finds herself transported to a world of old times, unusual times, witch times! Briley is not happy with the transport and uncertain if she'll ever be accepted by the new strange village of people. No matter what! Smokey is there for her to bring reality checks and encourage her as she is accused of being a witch, which she is.

Ms. Avory's is well crafted and delightful! Her dialogue funny and believable - for a fantasy! Of course there is love, the knight on a white horse so to speak and the mean guy too.

For the genre it is, the author's fine writing I think readers who enjoy light reads with witches and fantasy you'll enjoy this lighthearted entertaining book.

Amanda Young says

One of the best books I've read all year. Such a simple idea-witches and familiars taken to a personal, intimate level. I was crying my eyes out by the end of the book both in sadness and in happiness. Her characters immediately drew me in. It took me a couple pages to get into Briley because she used "bloody" a little too often, but within the first chapter Avory transformed Briley and her whole world. Recommend for anyone who loved Sabrina the Teenage Witch!

Cheryl Landmark says

Actual Rating: 2.5 Stars

As the star rating implies, this book was okay, but....

First of all, the main character, Briley, really got on my nerves and, unfortunately, I found I couldn't summon up a lot of sympathy and liking for her. She was just too full of self-loathing, self-pity and negative emotions all the time. For a twenty-two-year-old woman, she certainly acted, talked and thought like a much younger person. I just didn't understand why she hated herself so much and thought no one in the world liked her when there was so much evidence to the contrary. She didn't seem all that bright sometimes, either, and had

to have so much explained to her. Her petulant "Yeah, whatever", and the repetitive "meowed a cry" from Smokey, her cat, really became tiresome after a while. (view spoiler)

I did enjoy most of the interactions between Briley and Smokey and found their relationship to be quite sweet and loving. I've often wished I could comprehend and understand the thoughts of my dog and have the ability to carry on a conversation with her, so I thoroughly took pleasure in this concept of the book.

The world and the village of Maepole that Ms. Ivory created for the story was fairly well done, but I'm not sure if I will visit it again any time soon. Perhaps, since this is a debut novel, the subsequent books may have improved in quality, so I might continue on with the series at some point in time.

Michael Brookes says

Since devoting more of my reading time I've found myself reading books in genres I wouldn't normally have considered, it's easier to take a gamble when you're only risking a couple of quid! The Spirit of a Witch is another one of those occasions and I'm glad I did because it is a fun read from a new author.

The story is about a young woman being ground down in the crunch of games development (something I can sympathise with :-)) who finds herself transported to another world. For the first chapter I was a bit unsure, but the story got going quite quickly after that.

The biggest downer for me was the main character, she is a bit of a moaner. In fairness she has a fair bit to moan about. Thankfully her cat comes to the rescue and this was the biggest surprise. I'm not a cat person, but Smokey is an excellent balance to Briley's insecurities.

The writing itself is well crafted and very well polished for a new author. My only slight complaint was the moments of peril didn't quite ring as strongly as they should. That is a minor complaint as the story itself is well paced and leaves a nice opening for the next in the series.

If you like witches, or even just fantasy tales then you should give this a read.

Jane Peskara / Audrey Valentine says

Well first i have to say this book i bought because the author is my friend, she is great :) It is the first english book i ever bought :)

I admit i dont really like fantasy and scifi novels.

But i gave it a try, its fantasy, about witches mostly

I had a rough start with it, the first pages seemed to never end, maybe because i dont really wanted to read it(because its fantasy) but then, as soon as i got into it, i couldnt stop reading, i was there, amazing i never thought a fantasy novel could do that to me but this one did.

So i am happy to say this book is awesome, you all should read it even if u dont like fantasy, this is different, i mean did u ever hear of a book where the second main character is a grumpy cat? His name is Smokey and he always has something to say, not always nice but always a dear friend.

Briley the main character discovers she is a witch after she was brought to another world, slowly she starts getting more selfconfident and thats also something i like cos i can see myself in her and i love that finally she realizes that she is worthy and finally finds ppl who truly love her.

I cant wait to read the sequel, surely gonna buy it.

LOVE IT Briley and Smokey rule!!!!

I think it would be also a very good idea for a screenplay :)
