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Half Bad (The Half Bad Trilogy Book 1)



Synopsis

“An enthralling fantasy in the Harry Potter tradition.” Time magazine “A bewitching new thriller.” The Wall Street Journal In modern-day England, witches live alongside humans: White witches, who are good; Black witches, who are evil; and sixteen-year-old Nathan, who is both. Nathan’s father is the world’s most powerful and cruel Black witch, and his mother is dead. He is hunted from all sides. Trapped in a cage, beaten and handcuffed, Nathan must escape before his seventeenth birthday, at which point he will receive three gifts from his father and come into his own as a witch—or else he will die. But how can Nathan find his father when his every action is tracked, when there is no one safe to trust—not even family, not even the girl he loves? In the tradition of Patrick Ness and Markus Zusak, *Half Bad* is a gripping tale of alienation and the indomitable will to survive, a story that will grab hold of you and not let go until the very last page. From the Trade Paperback edition.

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Customer Reviews

I got this book because one of my students recommended it. I was interested because it is rare that I get a recommendation instead of being the one giving one. I wasn't disappointed. The story starts a little confusingly with action that is occurring around half-way through the novel while the main character, Nathan, is being held prisoner somewhere. I would liken it to a POW camp with the stuff he goes through. He then begins to fill in the story with his own memories of his life as he continues to deal with the current conditions that surround him. Nathan is a type of half-blood in a world that holds an underworld population of witches: White and Black. The color designation is not about skin, but about magical abilities. Nathan's mother was a powerful white witch with amazing healing abilities while his father was a very dark black witch who killed a lot of bad people and ate their hearts to absorb their magical "gifts" (ala Syler from the original "Heroes" television show). Despite this, with Nathan's mother deceased and a society of witches that hate him simply because of his birth, he truly has to fight for his existence. He lives his young life with his grandmother and three siblings that are from a different father. One sibling hates him and blames him for their mother's death while the other two love and care about him deeply. His grandmother also loves him and wants him to have a happy life. Unfortunately, the rest of the world seems against that idea except for those of black witch blood and one white witch who Nathan falls in love with. It is an amazing story about a young man who has to become more than he or anyone expected without knowing who in his life is friend or foe. Despite the bad things Nathan does and the anger he feels at the world, you can't help but root for him and wish him success. He's a wonderful character and I enjoyed this story immensely. So much so that I immediately ordered book two and preordered book three (which is now available). I will likely be adding reviews of those two books very soon. If they are anything like this one, there will be two more 5-star reviews for this author.

Let's start off by how turned off I am by the cover of this book. Folks had been giving it interesting reviews, though, so I picked it up at B&N and opened to the table of contents...and put it down to check out the next book I picked up. I just had no actual desire to read it. Well, this sounds like it's going to be a negative review. But the truth is, by and large, I enjoyed this book with a few problems. I give it a high 3.5 stars. Sampling on my Kindle worked a lot better than in the store. The 5%, I think, in the sample was engaging. It was also in second person, but it felt so natural, and it was different, which was something I needed right at that moment. So I bought the book. And almost immediately, the book goes into first-person present. This took me a while to get used to because it felt like a flashback that didn't end and having the present tense in the past felt unnatural. However, once I got used to it, I began feeling heavily for the main character, Nathan. Don't be confused. This

book isn't as much about witches and magic as it is about discrimination. Some people might feel like the amount of unfair treatment and even torture that he went through is too much, too dark. My heart ached heavily for him, even in those times when he did things I (and he) knew were going to be punished but he did them anyway. By the time we get back to the present (in a brief return to 2nd-person that didn't feel as natural as the original), I was fully invested in Nathan's troubles and search to receive three gifts on his 17th birthday (to make him a full witch, and possibly keep him from dying). The last quarter was a little slower, with a lot of waiting, considering the looming deadline. It did allow us to meet and connect to some new people who I'm sure are going to be incredibly important in book 2, but the slower pace meant for some slower reading from me. After what seemed like a climax, there's a stretch of traveling that I admit I ended up skimming because it seemed endless before reaching the conclusion that was really the perfect ending for this book. Some of the secondary characters felt like they could have been drawn a little more three-dimensionally. In particular, the love interest was kind of just a girl on a pedestal. But the strength of Nathan's character made up for these others' failings. I'm also hoping that the future books will make clear what makes the difference between a Black Witch and a White Witch, since so many of the Whites that we meet act so evilly against Nathan. I had a hard time deciding what to rate this book, because there were so many points that I had problems with. But the strength of Nathan's character plus the emotions I felt for him have made me decide to give the high rating I have. Recommended for fans of: witches (without much magic used in the book), interesting narrative choices, strongly developed MCs but weak secondary characters, books on a deadline, discrimination, your heart aching (in a good way), love interests on a pedestal, interesting eye descriptions.

I absolutely love this book. The magical world of witches is split in to white and black. Neither side really likes each other so imagine if you were half white witch and half black witch. That is the situation Nathan is in. His father is the most powerful black witch and that makes not being accepted by the white witches even worse. I devoured this book and currently reading the second book half wild. This series is simply amazing.

This is the author's first book, but it's a great showing and shows room for improvement as she continues to write more. (The second book in the trilogy continues to explore the themes set by the first). That said, anybody wishing to read this series should be aware that there is extensive and graphic child abuse, and that the book is more or less in first person, in the perspective of the child

receiving the abuse. The core issue at hand is a parable for racism and the way that racist attitudes being normalized and perpetuated by a society that doesn't question racist behavior can lead to gross mistreatment of citizens not matching the desired genetic make-up of those in power. Nathan struggles in an unfairly oppressive world that ultimately has been literally crafted to penalize him specifically, as the story unfolds. It's gripping, indeed, as the reviews suggest, but can be a little exhausting, emotionally-- it seems that nothing ever goes right for Nathan. Overall, I enjoyed the book and would recommend it, with the above warning for the abuse.

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