



Witchstruck

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~~Not a choice:~~

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

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Meg Lytton has a gift; she is a witch just as her aunt is, with a real talent for power. However, this is no fantasy land. This is England in the 16th century, a time when witches are held in suspicion and witch hunters make it their business to unmask them. At this time Mary Tudor rules, keeping her sister Elizabeth away from court, a virtual prisoner. Meg, as lady-in-waiting to the young Elizabeth, finds herself in a perilous position, pursued on the one hand by the fanatical, Marcus Dent, witchfinder, and on the other by the handsome, charismatic Spanish priest, Alejandro de Castillo. The scene is set for a swashbuckling romance with the added frisson of the supernatural.

By choosing to set her tale in this period, Victoria Lamb provides herself with the perfect setting. Not only will it be familiar to her audience, not least from the television series ?Tudors? with its flamboyant style which is mirrored here, but it is a time of drama and change. There is the character of Elizabeth herself, nicely portrayed with her known interest in the supernatural and the focus for anti-Catholic conspiracies. It is these conspiracies that provide the sense of danger in the narrative, while the presence of the devastatingly handsome Spanish aristocrat, Alejandro, who is also a priest, introduces romantic tension. There is enough historical detail to create a sense of period, while dialogue and action rather than extended description, ensure the plot moves along briskly. Meg is a lively heroine, and Victoria Lamb has cleverly taken a conventional romance, given it added colour and numerous plot twists to keep her readers on tenterhooks. They will certainly want to find out what happens next. An enjoyable recommendation for older readers ? even adults ? for whom gothic romance is their favoured genre.

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