



Eternal Is the Night

Alayna Ravenwood

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Eternal Is the Night is a suspenseful fantasy novel set at a foreboding magical university where secrets loom.

In Alayna Ravenwood's winding fantasy novel *Eternal is the Night*, secrets are uncovered, and a woman's fate is tested, at a magical university.

Anna spent years trying to recover from the murder of her mother and the year of darkness that followed. Derrick, who taught her how to wield swords, was the prime suspect in her mother's death.

In the present, Anna heads to Nightfall, a mysterious university nestled in the Scandinavian mountains. After undergoing grueling trials to be granted admittance, Anna learns that some recruits have disappeared and that the magic inside the hidden realm is disintegrating. She also falls in love with Prince Blake and works with her new friend Isabella, studying the highest-ranking members of Nightfall, the Aurkai.

This suspenseful novel moves through a bevy of involving events with speed, from the multiple life-threatening tasks that precede Anna's entrance into Nightfall onward. Some important plot points are skimmed over in the process, though. For instance, Anna at first seems consumed by her "missing year" following her mother's death, but after she arrives at Nightfall, it is set aside. Questions about who her father is, what her purpose at Nightfall is, and about what is causing the destruction of the realm are also underdeveloped.

Anna is a resilient heroine, moving from feeling vulnerable to empowered to confront a formidable, manipulative man at Nightfall. However, while Anna is well developed in terms of the traumas she's experienced and her pursuit of growth and personal truths, the book's secondary characters are somewhat interchangeable; their development is often cursory. Derrick and Anna's friends back home drop in and out of focus, and when an old friend's true identity is revealed, the shocking revelation is dampened by the lack of build-up behind it.

The book's worldbuilding is thorough, with each room and class at Nightfall described in clear terms. Anna's observations of her surroundings foreshadow coming developments, too, as when she notes the indentations on a wall in the catacombs that suggest their previous use as a dungeon. The magic system is explained in detail, too, as when Anna says her magic "burned through my veins like molten metal, ready to mold into whatever I wanted it to be." Magic's centrality to Nightfall comes into focus as it is revealed how many people possess such power.

The prose is clear and accessible, though also dominated by conversations and internal musings; mentions of distinguishing elements like glowing mushrooms and lit-up fruit are rarer. For instance, Anna's early discussion with a therapist is used to flesh out her past and her current emotional state. Their body language is addressed, too, and Anna's clipped thoughts appear in brief. Some conversations strain credulity, though, as when Anna tells her best friend from home about Nightfall and her friend accepts this information at face value, encouraging Anna to go to an unknown, magical world. Further, too much is unaddressed at the novel's end, which focuses on Anna's grit and resiliency at the expense of resolving dangling plotlines.

In the expansive fantasy novel *Eternal is the Night*, a woman at a magical school is determined to learn more about her past and ultimate destiny.

JENNIFER MAVEETY (April 9, 2026)

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