

The Girl of Hawthorn and Glass

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Created in a magical labyrinth of roiling emotion, the assassin Eli hopes to earn her personhood by hunting an elusive ghost. *The Girl of Hawthorn and Glass* is a surreal adventure.

Eli is a weapon, stitched together to fulfill the wishes of her world's ruling coven. Although she has a "mother," she is not human: she's a killer who carries seven enchanted, lethal blades. Witch children are "not innocent creatures to be kept pure and unstained like a silk pillowcase. They [are] grubby, dirty, bloodthirsty animals, vicious and feral."

Eli and her friend Kite, a witch in training, live in a dangerous time. When Eli murders the wrong target by mistake, she seeks refuge with a group of human and witch renegades. To earn her place, she has to prove herself by capturing the Heart of the Coven. Along the way, she is drawn to Tav, an enchanting and quirky nonbinary human who sees past her glamour.

This strange and riveting novel subverts popular images of witches and sprites. Eli, with her crocodile eyes, eats live crustaceans, smears blood on her face, and spits vile green phlegm to gain access to the labyrinth. The novel builds on its horrific moments, resulting in a fascinating world where nothing is certain. From disquieting images of wicked mothers and conjoined witches, to bold depictions of death by daggers, the novel leans into its weirdness. Its jarring elements are counterbalanced by moments of tenderness. Eli's attraction to Tav glitters with chemistry; conversations between Kite and her monstrous mother are authentic, with each word touching a raw nerve.

The Girl of Hawthorn and Glass is an appealing and spooky fantasy. Eli's quest to redeem herself and escape the vicious cycle of death is vibrant and human. When she finally leaves the only mother she's known, her self discovery is satisfying—and sinister, too.

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