



## Unwritten: The Zweeshen Chronicles #1

**Alicia J. Novo**

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Alicia J. Novo's fantasy novel *Unwritten* stars a fiery heroine.

Beatrix has a problem. Not only do books whisper to her, branding her a freak in her father's eyes, but her grandfather—the one person who made Beatrix feel wanted—has died, and the spell cloaking her magical Furie is fading.

Desperate for answers, Beatrix is transported to the Zweeshen, the magical land where book characters live. But even there, Beatrix is scorned. Mystery shrouds her past, and dark rumors stain her mother's name. Even worse, an evil Charmancer is burning books, closing their worlds forever. With the help of new friends, Beatrix races to uncover the truth before her own world is lost.

Beatrix's magical Furie is representative of her self-loathing. Over the course of the story, she comes to accept who she is, and the Furie begins to respond to her commands. Themes of self-confidence and personal acceptance lead to important messages for teenagers, magical or not.

The book's colorful cast includes groups of knockoff Sherlocks who roam the streets, a well-connected Elizabeth Bennett, and Emma, a handful of a girl whose book is unfinished. Beatrix's romance with a mysterious protector, William, is expected but sweet.

The Zweeshen is described with bold details. Its clever features, including Prolog mentors and the Bookends Cafe, are charming, even though Beatrix's situation is grim. Magic is abundant, but easy to understand; the book asks for a willing suspension of disbelief, and offers a nail-biting adventure in return. Still, the conclusion leaves questions unanswered, including about how Beatrix's mother met her father, and of whether William will break his curse. The door is left open to future adventures.

Fascinating and magic-filled, the fantasy novel *Unwritten* promises adventure right up to its final page.

VIVIAN TURNBULL (May / June 2021)

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