



## Druid's Sword

*Sara Douglass*

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## **Druid's Sword** Sara Douglass

World War II London: The Blitz has all Londoners in its grip and people struggle to survive amidst the terror and chaos of constant bombardment.

But is it just Hitler's Luftwaffe that is responsible for all the death and destruction that the city is facing? Brutus, the Greek Kingman who brought the bands of power to the isle of Alba millennia ago, once again walks the streets of London, this time as an American major. The men and women who are his eternal companions (and sometimes lovers and enemies) have been reborn in this time and place and all have come together for one last battle to complete the magical Labyrinth buried at the heart of the city. Half completed and resonating with an evil power, the Maze calls to them to finish the Game and possibly set all the players free.

But there is a new power that walks the land. It is a power that none anticipated and it has its own agenda. And by its actions could change the world forever.

*Druid's Sword* is the fourth and concluding volume in Sara Douglass's compelling Troy Game series, a riveting historical fantasy series of love and revenge set against the very fabric of time itself.

## **Druid's Sword Details**

Date : Published May 1st 2007 by Tor Fantasy (first published 2006)

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Author : Sara Douglass

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## **From Reader Review Druid's Sword for online ebook**

### **Dave says**

I felt like this book was a great disappointment. I am a big fan of Sara Douglass's work but I could not enjoy this book, no matter how hard I wanted to. This the 4th and final book of the Troy Game series. While reading the final book of a series you expect closure. In this book you may get closure but it doesn't make sense with the rest of the series. She uses the first 3 books to build up this elaborate world with certain rules and create these powerful characters which she works really hard to develop, and then turns them all into whiny pansies. All of the characters feel completely powerless in trying to stop their foe, so they spend most of the book scheming. However the scheming isn't very exciting for the reader because it seems like there is only ever one suggestion to defeat their enemy, and they just debate whether or not it will work.

Of course I am oversimplifying this book but that's because I'm so annoyed with the fact that I waited for four books for this nonsense of a story to get resolved and you just feel like the author never really thought about it until she started writing the last book in the series. Not only am I annoyed by this book for ruining this series for me, but I feel like it is harder for me to remember what it was that I liked so much about the Axis Trilogy and the Wayfarer Redemption. Perhaps she just doesn't know how to finish her stories. Don't get me wrong I have loved her work for quite some time but her endings leave me with an empty feeling. I used to think that this empty feeling was the I wish the book wasn't over feeling, but now I understand that the empty feeling has more to do with the inadequate sense of completion in the conclusion.

To sum up all the first 3 books of the Troy Game are filled with exciting character development as you watch these characters grow and watch their relationships flourish and in some cases wither. However this final book seems to ignore most of the tension and history between these characters. It seems like Sara Douglass haphazardly ended this story without ever really knowing where she was going to go with it. All in all leaving the reader disappointed.

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### **Julia says**

In this final book in Douglass' Troy Game series Jack, Noah and their friends are living in London under the German air raids of WWII. After millennia of living only to complete the Troy Game, the terrible reality of its true nature compels them to destroy it. However, they are stymied with the realization that Noah and Weyland's daughter Grace's fate is tied to that of The Game -- she will also be destroyed. A pale, mysterious woman offers a dangerous alternative which will also risk Grace's life but is their only hope.

Reading the first three books in the series, starting with Hades' Daughter, is an absolute must. Although I did, the series never felt fully coherent to me -- there are many characters, who change identities during four different time periods, to keep track of, as well as the myriad plot details having to do with The Game itself. I did not come away feeling that I truly understood The Game, which detracted from my overall satisfaction upon finishing. As does the rest of the series, this book suffers from awful cover art.

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### **Madbethcash says**

...merp.

This novel disappointed me. Darkwitch Rising is so excellent, playing the characters that have been so thoroughly crafted from hate to acceptance to love like a little perfectly tuned orchestra, and - here we go! A new major female character and lots and lots of Brutus. I'm tired of Brutus. Brutus needs to chill.

As an end to the series, the plot twists are interesting enough and the ending mostly satisfies. But because of how it ends, very little ties back to the development a reader has suffered through (let's be honest: these people are mostly terrible). You could probably read this book as a standalone novel and only be a little confused. We learn very early that the "flash-forwards" (those chapter prologues in italics scattered throughout the previous three books) were dreams Brutus was having, so no need to have paid attention to them much. True, Grace as a narrator is "better" than Cornelia/Caela/Noah ever was, since she's more determined and down-to-Earth (a more stereotypical heroine). But! That's not what I was here for! I wanted some crazy ending to the "soap opera for the ancient world" I'd been enjoying for 2000 pages, not a mildly traumatic action-adventure novel with romantic twists reminiscent of *Breaking Dawn*. ARE WEYLAND AND EAVING OKAY?!?!?!

Okay /rant.

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## **Sandra Smiley says**

It was one of those book series that hurt to keep reading, but I needed to see what kind of ending the author would give. I was more relieved that it was over than having everything end for these characters.

The obviously main character of the whole series, now known as Jack, started as Brutus, had dumped every responsibility because the woman he took by force has made up her mind and left him. He comes back before the Blitz of WWII in England, and we're not really given a reason why he decided on this. Now Noah, then Cornelia, is still reminding Jack that she's sticking with her decision to stay with now Weyland, then Minotaur, but would finish her duties because they have to be done (finish the Game). Although now, the Game has taken form in a malevolent girl who was introduced in the third book, and there is another problem that has cropped up. Along with the Troy Game tying her fate to the child of Noah and Weyland, a girl named Grace, there is another Game that is tied to Noah. The child Genvissa murdered in Cornelia's body is now a vengeful aborted child that is mirroring the Troy Game and wants to be the top Game in the world.

Along with dealing with the Lord of the Faerie (who now doesn't give a damn about anything else save this parallel world, thus losing what humanity he had), Jack is threatened by the Troy Game to complete the dance or she will destroy both the natural world and the Faerie, and Grace has been hexed into being a shadow of the Troy Game. They try to destroy the Troy Game, they will destroy Grace. If the mirrored Game does become completed, both the Troy Game and Grace will be stuck in the center of the Game forever, like the Minotaur once was.

Mind you, once was. They all seem to forget that. They blame that the Game was left alone too long (I blame Brutus because for all these centuries he only cared about power and not the people around him. He constantly bemoans taking Cornelia, cries that he's tired of pursuing her, lusts after Genvissa and when he finds out she wants power as much as he does, dumps her too. Funny how it's shown in this book that the Kingman needs to care about the Mistress of the Labyrinth in order to get the spell right, and yet he can't grasp this).

The best groaner part, and I knew this was coming, is Jack falling in love with Grace. Now, if they all had been reincarnated like the previous books and have switched roles, I don't think it would have mattered to me. Instead, he's now trying to court the girl of the woman he once was in a "toxic" relationship with. Even better, since Grace has all these new titles and powers, she's now the "perfect match" for Jack to complete the Game. How damned convenient.

To shorten this review up, I feel like Grace is a character thrown in just to make everything better again. Cornelia was treated as a non-entity for this ending, even though it was seeming like she would be pivotal in the end. After all these centuries, Jack learned some lessons but is still a terrible excuse of a man. Coel, now Lord of the Faerie, has lost all his humanity and kindness and has become a glorified self-absorbed elf like character. Genvissa has now become part of the Faerie and couldn't care less about the problems she has created in the world. A whole series of books that seemed like it would be rather Pagan, is not. The use of the curse "gods" and even saying titles that refer to goddesses are reduced to small "g", and the Christian god is referred to a capital "G". With that kind of spelling, I would have expected the Christian god to step in, but the author kept it to "minor" gods instead. It's very male-centric, with a feeling that men are true heroes and trying to keep things together, while women are conniving and constantly bungle their plans. Weyland doesn't count in this "perfect men" category because he was just an "abomination". Being half-bull disqualifies him.

The ending came fast and hard, and very unsatisfactory. I dislike it when the climax is pushed to the last 5-10 pages of a book, especially when it's taken four books to come to this. It ends with a very "My Fair Lady" ending, where you're supposed to imagine the perfect fairy tale like ending instead of showing it.

I gave this two stars because I honestly believe the author planned all these twists and turns and chain of events, and didn't pull it out of a hat at random. But now that I know the thought processes this author uses, I don't think I'll be picking up any other of her series. I tried to read the first book when it came out originally and dropped it. I see now why I did.

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## Elle says

Before I move into the brief analysis of why I despised this book, I would recommend anyone who felt strongly about the characters of the last book to keep away and possibly come up with their own ending. It will undoubtedly satisfy more, and prevent one's being disappointed with the execution of this novel.

From here, the spoilers.

One of my biggest problems with this book is the retrogressive development of her matriarchal and feminist themes. She begins the first book of the series by setting up two opposing worlds--one of violent patriarchy and another of peaceful but effective matriarchy--and then causing them to clash. What I thought was particularly effective, initially, was that the matriarchal society not only seemed to be the key to solving the problems created by the invading masculine forces, but it also seemed to bear the message that there was a way for the empowerment and coexistence of men and women. It was incredibly heteronormative, but it's a barely-disguised romance novel, so you don't expect much diversity. Regardless, I thought there were some incredible messages in the first book, which were also followed in later books.

The initial book seemed to say that women who supported each other and society at large would be celebrated, and women--such as Genvissa--who spurned sisterhood to rule in the world of men, reviled. And

that never seems to quite disappear from any of the books. But the development of some incredibly horrible habits throughout the series reinforced a much nastier story under the surface. Every time a character does something horrible--such as rape--and subsequently shows remorse, they are forgiven. One of the characters develops from a pedophilic sadist into the main romantic protagonist in the space of a book, with nary more than, "I am attracted to this beautiful, good woman! Can I be good, too? Love redeems!" Personal slights, rivalries, power grabs: those are much harder to forgive, and causes ridiculous problems in later books, problems which could have easily been resolved by short conversations. So: personal conflict remains difficult for relationships, but actual murder and rape is grounds for future romance. Does it get any more fucked up? Characters in all four novels just shrug away violence, betrayal, and cruelty because it's done for the "Greater Good" but still get to maintain their status as Benevolent Gods/Beings. As a metaphor for the way leadership works, this has been carried off well by numerous contemporary writers, such as le Carré, and even G.R.R. Martin (although I won't hold him up as a literary hero). Nevertheless, it was one of the major problems with this book, because it seems as if the author herself wasn't able to contemplate the reality of the horrors visited on faceless victims.

There's also the concern--voiced by many before myself--that she spends three books developing strong characters and relationships, finally resulting in a couple long-term relationships with some hope of evading all the betrayal and drama of earlier books (when you ignore that the relationships largely exist between victims and their sociopathic torturers and murderers), only to throw them totally to the wind in the past book. I was strongly in support of her eventually making clear how much of a dick Brutus-in-whatever-incarnation is. Then to turn his three-time victim into an ineffective, traitorous tart is not only concerning, but terribly anticlimactic.

As the relationships between Noah and Weyland and Harry and Stella were either totally neglected or casually destroyed (without mention of its reparation or complete dissolution), I realized that--as with most cheap romance writers--Douglass is utterly incapable of developing a fictional relationship past its dramatic start or finish. Falling in love, betrayal, passion, sex--these are all very easy. They're dramatic, fun, eventful. Depicting stability, trust, even-keeled passion? For some, it seems absolutely impossible.

There are the further problems that, again, as others have mentioned, this book is devoid of movement. Most of the time is spent wringing hands. I think most of this could have been reworked into a novel half its size. Or, rather, had the author executed it well, a novel of the same size, with an equal amount of focus on the now-main protagonists as past important characters.

This book was supposed to take place in the London of the Blitz. You would barely know it. Save for the bombs that conveniently drop (no, truly, they're turned into plot conveniences) occasionally, there is little to no interaction outside of the major cast of characters. Everyone drinks a lot of whiskey and smokes a lot of cigarettes (absurdly so, actually) that it turns into a staged soap opera, without the real feeling of the era. I've read books by some truly terrible romance novelists who did a much better job of portraying WWII London, and it's incredibly disappointing. Instead of turning to advantage what could have been fun, it seemed to be an exercise in wrapping up the central plot and walking away, without any sense of atmosphere or having read an actual novel for enjoyment at all.

It was, in short, extremely poorly executed and disappointing. Relative to what Douglass did with her Tencendor series, I put forth that she was quite talented at writing novels, but lackluster when writing book series. For that, I am heartily sorry, as I was so excited about the first book in this series. My enthusiasm waned, and as you can see here, I am now heartily disappointed.

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## **Susan says**

OK, here's the thing about this fourth and final book in the Troy Game series: In the first three books, nearly every character was driven to acquire, avoid, achieve, complete, or create something or someone. The story was driven by this.

At about 2000 pages in (when the fourth book starts), and internally consistent and totally logical to the previous events, the pace comes to a screeching halt. Everyone is stumped. There's a huge problem, and no one knows what to do about it, although if character X would just show up, everyone hope X will know what to do. X shows up, and is just as stumped.

They sit like this (doing and establishing important things, just really slowly) for about the first third of the book. By the half-way mark, it's back to the wonderful pacing of the first three. The ending was surprising, delightful, frantic, stressful, and compelling. New bits continue to come to light that change \*everything\*!

The series is absolutely worth reading. Even this fourth book, and even the first third of it. I was just really caught off guard, hence only four stars instead of the five each of the first three books rated.

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## **Kate says**

Talk about disappointing... The third book was SO good, it is so disappointing for the series to end this way! In the last book, the characters are all making serious strides in what they are learning (all except Brutus, of course), and then they do COMPLETE 360s in this book! Brutus changes from the outcast to the darling of the story, and everyone else's character turns ugly. How did this happen? How could she have ruined some of my favorite characters with horrid characteristics that they got rid of after their first lives? It seems that some of them revert back to their old habits, and some of them just start behaving atrociously. After spending three books making us fall in love with Cornelia, it feels like betrayal that Sara now tosses her into the garbage as a character not worth associating with - she says and does things I could not imagine her to be capable of after book three.

Again, disappointed.

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## **Molly says**

This series started off with such promise and was FABULOUS up through the third book, then took a turn for the worse here. The main characters that we've grown to know (Noah, Coel, Weyland) are relegated to rather down-played supporting actors and Brutus (with a lobotomy that suddenly makes him grounded and kind instead of the power-hungry flawed man we'd grown to sympathize with) is elevated to the main protagonist. Along with Grace (Noah & Weyland's daughter) they "save the world", but I was completely unsatisfied with the resolution, as there's tons of build-up and then the whole plot-is-hatched-&-executed part takes about five seconds and then there really isn't any happily-ever-after part. It just ends. I did like what she did with the Grace character, but it was hard to care much when she hates her parents, who were the real characters that I'd grown to admire. Eh well. it was still an alright read.

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## **Shannon says**

What a lame ending to the series! This book is even more of a letdown than the preceding book by far! Sara Douglass seems to have consistency problems both with plot and characters. This novel focuses on Jack (Brutus reborn) and Grace. Both characters are super lame. Grace is ineffectual and annoying and Jack has turned into a Gary-Stu that can do no wrong! Meanwhile everyone else is a background character. Including, yes, Noah who changed so much in Darkwitch Rising. Weyland has turned into a whiny and useless character as has the Lord of the Faire. Oh but let's not forget even MORE random characters that Douglass has thrown in just to confuse everything. Plot wise the book is just boring. Nothing happens for 75% of the book to help take this story towards a satisfying end. And when this group of people who resemble nothing like what you would think they would be after successive rebirths actually take action it's over quickly. The very last few pages do nothing to help give a sense of ending to this series. I also hope that Genvissa reborn is anyone's favorite character because you'd be hard pressed to even find evidence of her in this book.

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## **Tellulah Darling says**

This may have been my favourite book of the series. The Troy Game has been epic in scope, re-interpreting historical events through this mythological and magical lens. If you've read my reviews of the other three books, you'll know that I've had a lot of fun with the series. Although I found it quite soap opera-y.

I think that's why I liked this one the most. First off, it's set during WW2, which is close enough to my lifetime, that I've read and watched many stories set in that time period. I instinctively felt a deeper affinity with this book and enjoyed how events had been re-framed. But more than that, the characters didn't feel as arch and over-the-top as they had previously.

I've read a lot of reviews by disappointed fans feeling betrayed by the characters' inability to act for so much of the book. That's what I enjoyed. As we approached the climax, they couldn't fall back on the myriad of abilities they'd built up to easily solve the problem. The story had to become more of a character piece in the end because that way lay their redemption.

Was it without flaws? No, of course not. I didn't mind certain characters being phased out but I think Douglass missed an opportunity to do more with Weyland. He had become such a compelling force through the series, and in this book, he's simply either a non-entity or whiny. As well, I don't think Noah was brought to the most satisfying evolution of growth. She was the one character I felt remained firmly in soap opera territory.

All that said, I'm glad I waded through these weighty tomes because it was a super enjoyable series.

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## **Kelly Lynn says**

If I could give this book zero stars, I would. I was so incredibly disappointed while reading this book. I was tempted numerous times to just put it down, it wasn't worth the time or heartache but I felt compelled to finish out the series I had started just a year prior.



The first three books were filled with compelling and flawed characters. I remember reading the first book and absolutely hating Brutus. He was crass, uncouth, cruel, and in my opinion, a little stupid. And I loved it. I loved that a main character was not flawless and perfect. My favorite character by far was Cornelia, although she was whiny and ineffectual at times.

I really liked how the first three books intertwined a myriad of characters and showed the developing and crumbling relationships between them. How two characters who hated each other in the second book could fall in love in the third book and it was believable.

I think the most egregious problem with the fourth book is the casting aside of all these characters. The readers are suddenly slammed with new characters, that we feel no connection too but are expected to emphasize and root for. Grace seemed perfect in every way, fragile yet strong, beautiful yet scarred. Jack could do no wrong and fell head over heels in love with this one dimensional character.

The two female leads, Genvissa and Cornelia, seemed to disappear to make room for Grace and the male characters, except for Jack, seemed to be no good at anything; except sitting around wringing their hands in despair.

The White Queen smacked of a deus ex machina and I was disappointed that Sara Douglass would do something so amateur.

All in all, I was highly disappointed and frustrated by this book and I do NOT recommend it.

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## **Kelly says**

I followed this series for years, reading each new book avidly as the storyline and the relationships became deeper, richer, more complicated. I couldn't wait to see what sort of denouement Douglass had in store for the Troy Game.

I was particularly interested in what would become of Cornelia/Caela/Noah and her troubled bond with Brutus. I would have been satisfied with either of two possible endings:

- (a) A redeemed Brutus asks Cornelia for forgiveness, and she forgives him.
- (b) Brutus asks Cornelia for forgiveness, and she smacks him upside the head.

Instead, what do I get?

- (c) Brutus decides he's "tired" of loving Cornelia and "can't be bothered" with it anymore, and falls head over heels for HER DAUGHTER.

So let me see if I have this straight. If you rape, abuse, and ignore your wife, then proceed to judge and condemn her for the next few lives for the horrible sin of being human, your reward is a younger, prettier version of her who doesn't carry the baggage of your lives together. (Yes, Grace has troubles as well, but hers only serve to show what a Noble, Virtuous, Tragic Heroine she is.) Along the way, the Jack/Grace romance is also used to cheapen the hard-won bond between Cornelia and Asterion.

The plot plods as well; it seems to consist of umpteen characters sitting around talking about how they've all

been brought back together and hemming and hawing about what to do. I did sort of like the ending, but it was too little, too late, and with the wrong heroine.

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## **Luciole says**

So, I've finished it, finally, and this review will deal with this last book as much as the whole series.

I hesitated between "I liked it" and "I really liked it", and I'll go for **3\*** because, in the end, I really liked some parts of it, but I found the whole thing was rather "fine" than "thrilling".

Most parts I liked were the descriptions of the sacred or less sacred places; though I must confess I skimmed some pages, to get to the point. It seemed to me the author took her time to solve the plot (more than necessary). I also enjoyed the role given to Brutus-reborn William-reborn Louis-reborn... well, not reborn this time, as Jack. As I loathed Brutus, admired William, then hated Louis, I learnt to appreciate Jack. I even hoped he would find peace, and love, through his commitment to Grace.

But with Sara Douglass, there's always a double-edge to everything I like in her developments: while she focuses on Jack and Grace, all the other characters seem of less importance, of less consistency, of less interest in every possible way. They add nothing to the plot, they just allow SD to delay the outcome. Not to mention the sudden change in the narrative where Grace speaks; or with Grace again, taking credit for the novel title (as Noah was Hades' daughter, God's concubine then Darkwitch rising before).

What I had disliked in the previous chapter got even worse in this one : SD adds more and more issues for our heroes to face, as if the story wasn't intricate enough and needed to be grown. And in the same time, magical solutions appear, showing up from absolutely nowhere, like Jack-in-the-box (no pun intended). The unevenness of the rhythm, along with the poor explanations of the outcome disappointed me in the end. I wasn't even surprised by the trick on the little brown-haired girl (those who read it will know), since the same kind of twist was used in the third volume.

All in all, I enjoyed reading the whole series, but it would have gained to be shortened (maybe 3 volumes ?) and I wish the whole was more even.

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## **Billy says**

Let me start off by saying that I came into this series late in the game, starting at book 4 and not having read any of the prior books.

From what I can understand, a spell was started thousands of years ago - a weaving, that over the years have become corrupted and warped; a warding, twisted by hatred and deaths, that have become the very evil that it was designed to protect against. The spell is called The Troy Game, and the series is focused on a group of people, whose lives are closely tied to this game through never ending cycles of love, death and betrayal...

Despite the complicated plot, and the fact that I came into it late in the game, I still find the story surprisingly easy to come to grip with. Douglass did a good job bringing new readers up to speed with the characters and the story. It is a complicated story too, made even more complicated by the fact that all of the characters

involved are cursed to eternal lives through the act of rebirth, and are all known by different names (with different personalities) at different stages of the series.

It is a fairly interesting fantasy/romance novel - I liked the characters, the imagery, the setting... And the writing I though had a good flow to it. Having said that, the story and characters seemed cliché and predictable at times, and the book I felt had this whole epic feel that was never fully realised. Once again keep in mind that I have not read the prior books, and that perhaps if I had read the four books as a whole it might have given me a more complete and epic experience.

I really enjoyed the book - alot. However, my perspective is likely to be different from many other readers, who are probably judging this as a series, whereas I have experienced it more as a standalone title.

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## **Micaela says**

Druids Sword is what happens when an author loses sight of her plot, characters, and initial vision.

Sorry for sounding bitter but this book almost made me want to get rid of the whole series. It's like everything that came before never happened and some characters are devolved or changed so drastically that you're hard-pressed to remember what you loved about them in the first place.

The glorification of Jack (Brutus Reborn) and Grace isn't just frustrating...it commits the greater crime of being uninteresting. These two generate all the heat of a sno-cone. I admit, when you consider the dynamite chemistry Weyland (Asterion reborn) and Noah (Cornelia reborn) had in Darkwitch Rising, any pairing following that up would be at a severe disadvantage...but Grace and Jack are the literary equivalent of a cold shower.

When you are dealing with a multiple-novel story, you expect some changes. Sometimes you love them, sometimes you don't. All I ever want, though, is to feel like what I'm reading is the next natural progression to what's come before it. I despise when the next installment feels like it belongs to a completely different series...and that's how Druid's Sword feels to me. It makes me wish I had stopped at the marvel that is Darkwitch Rising.

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