



Darkling

Brooklyn Ray

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Port Lewis, a coastal town perched on the Washington cliffs, is surrounded by dense woods, and is home to quaint coffee shops, a movie theater, a few bars, two churches, the local college, and witches, of course.

Ryder is a witch with two secrets—one about his blood and the other about his heart. Keeping the secrets hasn't been a problem, until a tarot reading with his best friend, Liam Montgomery, who happens to be one of his secrets, starts a chain of events that can't be undone.

Dark magic runs through Ryder's veins. The cards have prophesized a magical catastrophe that could shake the foundation of Ryder's life, and a vicious partnership with the one person he doesn't want to risk.

Magic and secrets both come at a cost, and Ryder must figure out what he's willing to pay to become who he truly is.

Content Warnings: Scenes of bloodletting, consuming blood, erotic bloody scenes. Death (and resurrection) of a main character and animal/pet. Explicit sexual content. Depiction of anxiety.

Darkling Details

Date : Published January 8th 2018 by NineStar Press

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Author : Brooklyn Ray

Format : Kindle Edition 126 pages

Genre : Fantasy, Paranormal, Lgbt, Romance, M M Romance, Glbt, Queer

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From Reader Review Darkling for online ebook

Leah says

This book is the perfect blend of sweet softness and dark, bloody ferocity.

Brooklyn Ray does a fantastic job of creating a contemporary world where witches, full of heady power, are a facet of everyday life and where magical abilities are encouraged and feared at the same time. The world they've begun building with story is pulsing with vibrant vitality. It's recognizable for the reader, but it's also a different reality, fascinating in its supposed differences and easy to get lost in.

Read the full review on my blog!

H?ng Ng?c ? says

3.5/5

magic, but make it gay and HORNY

ah. there's nothing better to pull yourself out of a reading slump than queer erotic stories about witches. seriously. i'm so glad i've come across this lovely novella.

RTC!

J.C. Long says

4.5 Stars. I received an ARC from the author in exchange for an honest review.

I want to say right off that this story hooked me in the first scene and didn't let me go. I read it in two sittings, and the only reason it wasn't one sitting was I had to go to my day job. Brooklyn Ray presents a story that is vivid, sharp--sometimes painfully so--and intriguing. I'll admit that I'm a sucker for magic and witches of any kind, so I clamored for a chance to get an ARC. I wasn't disappointed.

Magic: I LOVED the magic in this story. The way that it permeated everything and never, for me, ventured into the territory of too gimmicky. I felt like the magic combined with the setting in a way that just breathed life into the story.

Characters: Ryder and Liam were very well drawn out. I really liked the way the author presented the identity of Ryder in such a casual way, a few side remarks that weren't given any unnecessary weight; his identity was there but was NOT the focus of the story. They had chemistry, which I appreciated, though I felt like Liam could be a little dimmer next to Ry's brightness. The side characters were fun but could have been a little more fleshed out, particularly Tyler and Donovan. There's so much about them I want to know. And I love Thalia.

Plot: Well-paced, thought out and almost perfectly delivered, it hits every beat on the way. There are some darker elements that you get in the trigger warnings, though I don't feel as if they made the story heavy in any way. Sure, it was dark, but there is hope and light and power in this story.

All in all, I can't wait for the next return to the world of the Port Lewis Witches.

Richard Derus says

Real Rating: 2.5* of five

After reading the Kindle sample, I'm sure it's not the book for me. I don't care to read about young adults, or new adults, or whatever it is we're calling those within spittin' distance of twenty either side.

I am simply not interested. I found Ray's writing perfectly adequate, but such a short sample doesn't tell the full tale. I'm sure the Shannara/Magicians crowd will lap it up, and heaven knows should!

Rafa Brewster says

This novella blew me away. I was highlighting every third line and had to stop, the prose was pure magic and yet so, so real. It was lyrical and powerful and moving. Dark yet so full of light. Smart and sexy. I will try to articulate better later when - if - I ever recover.

Aleksandra says

Buddy read with Iam!

Darkling is paranormal novella about witch Ryder, who has unique abilities and many secrets, kept from his friends (cycle-mates). If you're looking for a short read with witches, rituals, demons and lgbtq+ cast of characters, *Darkling* is for you.

However, I didn't enjoy reading the book as much as I hoped I would. I found the pacing was off. It took me too many hours to finish this short of a book, because I was constantly distracted. The story is set in our world but with paranormal elements. The author failed to explain those elements, I was confused and I still have questions after finishing the book.

What I did like about the novella are characters and romance. Ryder is the protagonist of the story. He's in his twenties, he's trans and grumpy. Ryder has unique abilities, which he hides from his friends, he hides his feelings from his best friend and he has other secrets. I've got the big Ronan Lynch vibe from Ryder. Ryder's LI is Liam, who's magical opposite of Ryder. I liked Liam, but he seems to have not much of a personality, to be honest. I did like them together. They have great chemistry together and I love the development of their relationship.

My favorite character is Jordan, who's Ryder's older sister. She's cool! Jordan is a necromancer, she's dating Thalia, head of the witch clan. Jordan is very supportive and smart and snarky. I want a book about Jordan,

please and thank you.

All in all, *Darkling* has great concepts and lovable characters, but the execution was lacking in my opinion.

Content warning: magic blood kink

Acqua says

I didn't think this was going to be my thing, but I loved it.

4.5 stars.

Darkling is a paranormal m/m romance with a trans main character. There are also a side f/f couple, a side m/m couple and a non-binary side character; it's implied that every character is queer, and I'm always here for all-queer casts.

I loved the atmosphere. *Darkling* is set in the rainy town of Port Lewis, and while there's not a lot of worldbuilding (it's a novella), I loved this setting, and I think it was perfect for the mood of the story, which is **dark and witchy**.

I also loved the characters. Not only did I actually care about the main couple, which happens more rarely than it should, I also really liked Ryder's family dynamics (his sister Jordan is great, their scenes were probably my favorites) and the friendships. Characters in novellas are usually underdeveloped, but here I liked every single one of them. I would love to read novellas in their PoVs.

I really liked Ryder. He's a fire witch, but he is also a darkling, a necromancer. He is trying to hide this from his friends, but his magic is getting out of control lately. Liam is a water witch, and has been his friend for years, but what Ryder feels for him definitely isn't friendship. I loved them both and I loved their relationship. ***Darkling* is a friends-to-lovers story that doesn't rely on miscommunication; it doesn't need to.** It's so short that the will-they-won't-they part (unpopular opinion: I hate it unless it's done perfectly and it usually isn't) is barely there.

I also really liked the sex scenes, they were never boring.

The writing wasn't perfect - there was a bit too much purring for my taste and there were some awkward dialogue tags here and there - but I didn't care, because **I could feel the emotions of the characters, and that's what really matters.**

So, this is a continuation of the "Acqua picks up book on a whim and loves it more than all the ones she was actually anticipating" trend from 2017.

Content warnings for: explicit sex scenes, blood magic, animal death (resurrected!), and death (resurrected! #resurrectyourgays2k18)

Edit 09/05/2018: I reread it for the sequel and loved it as much as the first time!

J.P. Jackson says

Every now and then I read a book, see a movie or watch a TV show, and then sensations that are elicited through the soundtracks, visuals, and words linger...the vibe of the experience settles into your bones and it becomes part of you.

Now, it's no secret, I tend to like the dark and creepy stuff, and if it's settling on the edge of "oh man, I can't believe it went *there*", so much the better.

Darkling is a perfect example of this. After every reading session, I found myself walking off the train with dark powers swirling around me, Ryder's angst sat comfortably within my skin, and I looked at strangers as if they were playthings...toys to be tormented - in other words, the dark magic was brewing.

This was my 'takeaway' from Brooklyn Ray's short novel. The book is steeped in clever descriptions and laced with flavors and sounds, in short, the story is magical, witchy, and absolutely dark.

Those who have issues with blood, be forewarned, this may not be the story for you - but for me and my inner horde of demons, we screamed in delight as the story unfolded.

Each character was distinct and unusual in their own mystical way. I loved Christy's psychic white witchery and Liam's water mastery. But by far, Ryder with his blend of Fire and Necromancy stole my heart. Donovan has us guessing as to his true nature, and Tyler was the one you loved to hate. I particularly loved the dynamics within the Wolfe clan, and how they treated Ryder and his 'coming to terms' with his necromantic talents. And I can't forget to mention the familiars - super wow!

This is a well thought out story, steeped in history, with rich characters and an intriguing setting. I anxiously await whatever else may come about from the Port Lewis witches!

I want to live in Port Lewis, and I want to be a witch.

Well done!

Trio says

There were things about this book that I absolutely enjoyed - the poetry of the writing, the creativity of the story, the depth the author brought out in Ryder's character, were all amazing. As I worked my way through some things started to frustrate me.

The flow of the whole story from beginning to end was perfect, addictive, like being along for the ride and totally immersed each step of the way. That said, I felt lost too much of the time. Even though I understood *what* was happening, I wasn't really sure *why*. I felt like I was plucked down in the middle of a series and hadn't read all the books leading up to this one.

The characters were clearly a good group of friends, and the author captures the relationship dynamics between them. My biggest issue was that I didn't really buy the change in Ryder and Liam's relationship. The history just wasn't right between them to make it realistic for me. Liam also seemed a little two dimensional

and I wasn't sure what Ryder really wanted him for (other than sex, of course).

Brooklyn Ray truly has a beautiful way of writing, some passages were absolute poetry and a pleasure to read. It was a very nicely crafted story and I'm definitely looking forward to reading more from this author.

book provided by NetGalley for the purpose of my review

Laxmama says

3.25 STARS There were a lot of things I enjoyed about this, I found the premise intriguing, and I liked the magical aspect. For me I felt a bit lost at times through the book, as if I was dropped into a series and missing something or that the story was cut short, backstories missing. I also didn't get much dimension from the Liam character, I don't know if it's because we didn't have his POV, or just no backstory. I think if I had more content, background or build it wouldn't have been as confusing. Yet there were great parts, scenes, moments.

?Dani? ?Touch My Spine Book Reviews? says

I give this book 4 out of 5 Prideful and Paranormal Stars! I really enjoy this LGBTQ+ romance novel. The main character, Ryder, is trans and his relationships and his emotions bleed through this paranormal romance with an intensity that I won't soon forget. I just was so intrigued and adored Ryder!??? This was a great novella and I read it in one sitting. It was the perfect bite sized version of Paranormal Romance a 'hit it and quit it' novel. Liam and Ryder have a very intense relationship that really had me on the edge of my seat! The reason I didn't give this 5 stars was because there is a Trigger Warning in here that is one that can get to me. There is a brief death of an animal but the animal comes back. It was just me because of previous experiences but thought I should mention that. This book was fantastically written and new author Brooklyn Ray is sure to become very sucessful.

Overall, I recommend this book to any readers who love a good LGBTQ+ novel or a good paranormal romance! I have to add that I love the LGBTQ genre because I am a proud polyamorous pansexual lady!? You can find the rest of this review and others @ <http://touchmystinebookreviews.com/20...>.

Karen says

Holy cow!!! I found me a hidden gem...

If you're a fan of paranormal...especially witches, you need to check this one out. It's seriously good with a definite different edge to it. While it was shorter than I would have liked...but then isn't that true of any book that we enjoy? The upside is that book #2 is coming out soon...and lucky me I have an ARC for it, so guess what book I'm reading now? Come on you don't have to be a psychic to figure this one out...full review for this jewel to follow soonish!

full review...

4.5 stars rounded down to 4 because still no 1/2 stars here on GR and I seriously wanted more on this one

and it's coming...soonish!

I'm honestly not sure why this one didn't catch my eye before now, but as soon as I started reading 'Undertow' which is book #2 in this series and one that did catch my eye. Enough so that I said yes please when asked if I wanted to review it, however, I'd barely started reading 'Undertow' and I knew I'd screwed up by not reading the first book...so, my recommendation is if you're interested in reading 'Undertow' read this book first.

'Darkling' is the first book in Brooklyn Ray's 'Port Lewis Witches' series and I'm happy to say it was worth putting 'Undertow' on hold for a day while I went back and read it. "Port Lewis Witches" is one of those series where the stories really are connected and the characters go from story to story so much of the background and what happens in 'Darkling' is relevant to events in 'Undertow' and at less than 100 pages each it's not a big task to take the time to read both books but so worth it.

For me it's been a while since I've gotten so excited about a book of this genre. On a more general scale 'Port Lewis Witches' would be paranormal, but this isn't your vampires, werewolves, shifter paranormal...no this series is predominantly 'witches'!!! While it's not that witches are obscure or anything like that but in general they don't tend to be as popular as other creatures of the paranormal world. So for me it's that little step outside of the norm box that can often times make things interesting.

While I'd love to talk more about the actual story that's not going to happen because at just under a hundred pages this is one tightly written story with little to no superfluous information. Essentially Darkling is Ryder's story but we can't have Ryder's story without being introduced to Liam, Christy, Tyler and Donovan. These are the members of the circle that he belongs to and Liam is also his love interest.

While we're given a solid background for each of these characters trust me when I say there's more to come and for this book Ryder is definitely the focus. I really like all of these witches and I love that they each have their own talent some of which won't be fully revealed in this story.

Just like with us normal people at the heart of so much of what goes wrong are secrets...secrets about their magic, secrets about themselves...who they are and what they can do or what they may become...so many secrets and this story plays out against a background of secrets coming to light and changing so much of what these young witches know to be real.

Brooklyn Ray is a new to me author and this first foray into her writing world has been a wonderfully enjoyable time for me and I'm very much looking forward to finding out what comes next with this circle of witches.

Ok so that's my ramble about 'Darkling', so while it's a quick read at less than 100 pages. I've read books that were twice as long and been lucky if I got half as much story so definitely recommended...especially if you plan on reading 'Undertow'.

Maria says

Short summary: I loved this book.

To be fair, I wanted to read this since I heard it was being written after I finished a novella set in that same

universe in the INTO THE MYSTIC anthology.

And what can I say, I still love the world of witches, necromancers and interpersonal connections Ray created. They are fast becoming one of my go-to favorite writers. It's the way they let emotions flow so naturally on the page and how who people are is not just stated and then we go from there. I can *feel* the characters, their complexity and their layers and their personal histories.

While Liam was a tougher nut for me to crack, I fell so deeply in love with Ryder right from the start. Following him on his path of trying to figure out who he is as a fire witch and a dealer of death, what he wants to be and how to navigate the abundance of secrets he carries with him grabbed me and sucked me in from the very first page. How it all escalated, shattered and came together in new ways was beautiful to read.

I should add that one of Ryder's secrets he keeps from his witch mates is that he's trans. However, I loved how Ray didn't make it *the* big thing Ryder keeps from everyone. It's just part of this bundle of secrets he keeps from his friends so they won't figure out that he's not just a white witch, but the child of a necromancer. And he struggles a lot with his magic and keeping his darkness under wraps, a lot more than he does with his gender identity and people knowing or not knowing about it. Also: Yes, supportive family please.

I have to admit I was a bit scared how I would handle the dark magic part. Please read the content warnings, y'all. For me though, how Ray described the allure, consequences and dangers of the blood magic was beautiful, deadly alluring and a bit addictive. I do think readers who might get triggered by blood play and temporary death should proceed with caution though. This story is -dark-, even though it barely felt like it for me while reading. It just felt... like magic.

In the end, this book was perfect for me. I can't speak for people who haven't read REBORN – I did feel like my reading experience of this story was even better because I already knew things about this universe before going in. Still 5 stars and huge heart eyes from me for this story.

? Silvia ? says

Ohhhh I loved this???

TWs for death&resurrection (of a MC and also of an animal) and blood magic

Xan West says

This gorgeously written novella feels less like a romance at the center and more like a layered identity/coming out story for the MC, Ryder. There is a central friends to lovers m/m romance arc, but at its core, this is Ryder's story, about him coming to terms with his identities as a witch, about the way magic moves and shapes things for him, and about him coming out about his magical heritage and the shape his magic will take in the future. The romance sort of gets swept along in the blaze of all the angst and confusion and the explosion of Ryder's secrets.

For the rest of my review, go to my site.

Content warnings (view spoiler)
