



## Girl in The Glass

*Zoe Brooks*

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“I will have to say it: 'I am Anya and I am nothing'. I will look down at the floor as I say it, so that I don't see the smile on my aunt's face, so she won't see the defiance in my eyes. She will get her victory. She always wins these battles. I know it, she knows it. But one day, one day she will not.”

This Cinderella story for adults, set in an unnamed world, has no fairy godmother and no handsome prince, just a girl of spirit and her strange companion.

Orphaned at the age of 10 in circumstances that she refuses to explain, Anya grows up trapped in the house of her abusive aunt where she and Eva, her Shadow, are treated as slaves. As her aunt tries to break her and the punishments become increasingly life-threatening, Anya struggles to find affection and self-esteem. When the inevitable showdown arrives, where will Anya find the strength to survive and escape? And if she does escape, what then? An arduous walk across an unforgiving desert to a city where an even worse danger lies.

## Girl in The Glass Details

Date : Published March 2012 by White Fox Books

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Author : Zoe Brooks

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Genre : Fantasy, Fiction, Drama

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# From Reader Review Girl in The Glass for online ebook

## Iain Grant says

Girl in the Glass is a magic realist novel about Anya, orphaned after the death of her father and her healer mother and forced to endure a young life in servitude to her wicked aunt. The huge family home she lives in (in a town on the edge of an impassable desert) is her world and her prison, that is until Anya and her twin/Shadow Eva escape...

Zoe Brook's novel is a true magic realist story. Its setting is a world that is not ours but is nonetheless recognisable. It is a novel in which the almost magical and vaguely supernatural are an accepted reality. Reading it, I couldn't help but be reminded favourably of other authors. The setting and Anya's sprawling and occasionally grotesque family put me in mind of Gabriel Garcia Marquez. Having said that the harsh, epic landscape of the story and the fable-like quality of a narrative held shades of Paulo Coelho.

But more than those magic realists, this book put me in mind of the science-fiction/fantasy of Anne McCaffrey. Like McCaffrey at her best, Brook's setting exists to serve the characters. The world she has created is fascinating but not as fascinating as the engaging, dynamic and (above all else) sympathetic female protagonists of the novel.

Girl in the Glass is a book of people over plots. It is (watch out - big word coming up) a bildungsroman which follows Anya's development from childhood to womanhood. Brook's story subscribes to the idea that anything that does not kill us makes us stronger because it is through adversity that Anya grows and survives. Anya is pitted against some truly vile characters, many of them wolves in sheep's clothing, who attempt to destroy, belittle and objectify our heroine. At times, reading this novel, it does feel as though if something can go wrong for poor Anya, it must go wrong. In fact, if it weren't for the balance introduced in the shape of a few altruistic souls Anya meets along the way, Girl in the Glass would be too darkly pessimistic for my tastes.

It is a gripping read with only a few niggling problems.

Because it is a book of growth and travel and change, Girl in Glass is quite episodic in nature. There are no characters to share our entire journey from beginning to end apart from Anya and Eva. And, because their flight from various pursuers necessitates a number of name changes, even Anya and Eva do not remain constant.

The only other issue I had was that, perhaps because of its self-published nature, the book has more typographical errors than I'd care to see. Nonetheless, it is a beautifully formatted book with better functionality than a lot of professionally published Kindle books. And, given its low cost, it represents far better value for money than many books on the market today.

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## Evie Woolmore says

This evocative and atmospheric novel explores the close relationship between two young women, set against a harsh social and physical environment. Anya is an orphan, abandoned to live with her brutal Aunt in a hierarchical household where punishment seems endless. With her is Eva, her Shadow, from a caste whose

identity is never thoroughly explained but who carry the burden of social pariah and outcast, tainting those who associate too closely with them. In this relationship we find the core of what Zoe Brooks has created here: a world which is both recognisable and not, whose elements are all too familiar and yet powerfully imagined beyond the familiar. It is magical realist in some senses but also, as some other reviewers have noted, it has a kind of otherness about it that some science fiction fans may identify with.

The characterisation is strong and interestingly cast. Anya and Eva are well drawn and we observe as they evolve their identities and their names to protect themselves as they embark upon a journey of which this novel is just the beginning. But there are enormous numbers of other characters too, from key players like Anya's dead mother and her vicious Aunt, the King of Pharsis and Julian, to smaller bit players like dressmakers and landladies, each painted with equal care. This is perhaps one aspect which may put off some readers: the cast is so great that we sometimes feel we have abandoned members of it as Anya and Eva journey on, and they seem lost to us forever.

Likewise, the somewhat episodic nature of the book is sometimes blurred by a lack of spatial punctuation, an absence of breaths between scenes as it were, and at times this threatens to overwhelm the reader. The tone of voice is also occasionally ambiguous: for much of the time Anya speaks both in dialogue and narration in the authentic voice of her early adolescence, but at other times she seems far too adult, too literal, even though we know that Anya's life has caused her to grow up very quickly.

The novel ends with an opening, a new beginning as it were, as Anya begins to explore the notion of a vocation, a destiny, a path into the future that is hers and not carved by circumstance. If you enjoy this novel you are likely to read the next one, for Zoe Brooks has created a world within this book that will draw you in and not easily relinquish you.

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### **Siobhan Pratt says**

I finished reading this book about a week ago, and it must have made an impact on me, as I'm still thinking about the central characters, their adventures, personalities, reactions to circumstances and life decisions. I believe this is going to be the first of a trilogy, and whilst I don't usually read stories that flow into more than one volume, I am already wondering what might happen to Anya and her Shadow next, so will look out for the sequels.

As other reviewers have said, the reader is never privy to what country, religion or era the story takes place in. It is so well crafted that it is not necessary to know, indeed, it adds to the mystery and charm of the book to not have any preconceptions or prejudices to any specific known place.

Anya is an admirably strong girl, yet not infallible, and I found myself intrigued by her relationship with her 'Shadow' (an interesting concept on its own).

This is an easy to read book about two young girls who insist on surviving in a world where the odds are stacked against them, and who show there is strength in loyalty, friendship and servitude.

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### **Erin Black says**

...Wow!

This is the first book I have reviewed that deserves more than a 5 star. I give this book a 6 star rating!!!

I have never been able to start a review like this. This is a phenomenal story told absolutely beautifully...and the cover is stunning!

This book has quickly become one of my all time favourite books!!!

Do you remember back when you were in high school, in English class how they made you read a book that they thought had a 'powerful story'? That dreaded English teacher made you write an essay on it (or a book report)...how those books were usually pretty dull and boring? This would make a perfect book for that! Only, it would be enticing, and would make you actually want to do well on your essay. As I was reading it I kept thinking to myself how if I had novels like this one to read in high school, I would have ended up with a much higher grade!

It has all of the elements that an awesome novel should have...good character development, good flow, good grammar and spelling, it has an amazing plot line with many climaxes. I could honestly say this book had me from beginning to end. I just didn't want to finish reading it.

The characters were so well developed that I found myself actually feeling Anya's pain, her anger, her innocence and her strength. Even though I have never been through any of the hardships that she has endured I felt such a strong connection to her and her shadow. (What is a shadow anyways? I am still wondering that!) I felt an overwhelming sense of protection towards Anya. I really wanted to be able to step in and save her. Stop her awful aunt and all the other horrible people that were hurting her.

This book brought out a ton of emotion from anger, fear, sadness and even excitement. I just couldn't put it down!

I strongly urge you to buy this novel...you will finish it in no time and it will be one that impacts your life.

The best part is that there are still two more books to read afterwards!!!

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### **Christa Bistretzan says**

This intellectual work of fiction is about Anya and her Shadow, Eve. It is a tale of survival against all odds in an unforgiving, unloving desert.

The reader first meets Anya, already orphaned by her parents, living with her paternal Aunt and Uncle. We learn that Anya is an unwelcomed part of the household, often taking blame and punishment for acts that she has not done. It is one of these acts that boost her goal of getting out of the household, which she does, thanks to her Shadow. Eve and Anya travel alongside of the main road, however, not on the road, in fear of being detected. With help of "Frank", the girls make it to the big Northern City, and change their names to make survival easier. Life there is not easy, and taking jobs that each of them don't like leads them to the "King" who woos Rosa (Anya) and makes her his. Through this destructive relationship, Rosa's strength and determination are beaten down until she escapes again. It is not until our heroine meets Alma and through knowledge and learning, Rosa grows and gains herself back.

I am glad to learn that this is only book one of a saga, as when I was done reading it, I wanted more! This is a coming of age story that is so much more. I fell in love with Anya and was cheering for her happiness throughout the book. I was happy when she fell in love with a boy at her work; I was saddened by her abusive relationships, shocked at her treatment by her own family. I loved that this story was based in the desert, something that I knew very little about and learned more about as I read the story. I love to read fiction and learn at the same time. This book was well thought out, well researched as evidenced by the knowledge that is shared with the reader in regards to the healing plants of the desert and customs related to the people who live there.

This is a great book for someone who is looking to escape reality, and be taken away. I feel that people who are looking for a strong heroine should read this book, as throughout the story, whatever our heroine is doing or is being done to her, she is enduring it. It is a book about a relationship that is never taken for granted with Anya and Eve- how two people can connect and prosper together.

Recommended for a good weekend read.  
4 stars!

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### **Sage Adderley-Knox says**

*I am Anya and I am nothing.*

Eleven-year-old Anya is an orphan being raised by her hateful and vicious aunt. She endures mental and physical abuse because of the similarities she shares with her mother, whom her aunt despised. Eva, Anya's "Shadow," loyally stands by Anya through her distress and conjures up a plan that leads them across the dangerous desert away from their life of slavery. A city set between the sea and the desert has its own secrets and danger awaiting Anya and Eva.

Anya's abuse is intense and it is a wonder she stays strong throughout it all. I became caught up in Anya's struggles and minor victories. I enjoyed the many characters that entered Anya's life and affected her in different ways. While it is never clear where or when this story takes place, the author tells the story so smoothly that while I was curious, it didn't take away from anything. I think I would have liked to read additional background about Anya's parents, along with more details regarding the people known as "Shadows." Zoe Brooks does a wonderful job giving Anya a new persona each time she changed her identity in an attempt to protect herself and Eva.

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### **Lynne Cantwell says**

The Healer's Shadow series - Zoe Brooks This week, you get a three-fer -- mainly because I had all three books in the Healer's Shadow series and once I'd finished the first one, I just kept reading 'til I'd read the whole thing. This series of books in the genre of magic realism follows the tale of Judith and her Shadow, Sarah. When we first meet them in *The Girl in the Glass*, they are young girls named Anya and Eva, living in the home of their cruel aunt, who took them in after their parents died in the plague. The aunt believes Anya to be a witch like her dead mother, the healer. Eva, as Anya's Shadow, is treated as less than human -- but

she gets the better end of the deal, as the aunt finds every opportunity to punish Anya by beating her and/or locking her in the broom cupboard. After one particularly harsh punishment, the girls run away from home, across the desert, to the town of Pharsis -- a port city that suffers from frequent earthquakes. The girls change their names to Rosa and Elizabeth; they move into a condemned house and find odd jobs. Eventually Rosa comes to the attention of a powerful man named Rex, and again the young women are subjected to humiliation and abusive treatment until they run away. They change their names once again, to Judith and Sarah, and have a stroke of luck: an elderly perfume maker named Mistress Elma takes them in, and Judith finds her calling. Or one of them, anyway. As it happens, many of the herbs and oils used in the art of perfume-making can also be used for healing. And in *Love of Shadows*, Judith is called upon to use her healer's gift not only to help injured dockworkers, but also to staff a secret hospital for Shadows who have been attacked by students at the local university. There's a war going on against Shadows in Pharsis, and Judith and her husband Bruno find themselves embroiled in it. In the final book, *The Company of Shadows*, Judith and her young sons travel to Bruno's home village in the northern forest. There, Judith learns more about both Bruno's upbringing and her own, and finds peace -- and a real home -- at last. Judith's story is compelling, and Brooks does a first-rate job in revealing it, bit by bit, over the course of these three novels. The reader also gets hints about where Shadows come from, and when the full story is revealed, it's a head-shaker at the very least. All of this is played out against a fully realized backdrop, magic-realism-style: Anya's desert home is devoid of love as well as moisture; as Rosa, and again as Judith, her world is rocked by personal earthquakes every bit as unexpected and severe as the real ones that plague the city; and there's a good reason why Judith keeps falling for men from the Forest, where magic is as abundant as the flora and fauna, and as nurtured. For fans of women's fiction as well as those who love magic realism, I highly recommend all three books in the Healer's Shadow series.

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## Shalini Ayre says

"I will have to say it: 'I am Anya and I am nothing'. I will look down at the floor as I say it, so that I don't see the smile on my aunt's face, so she won't see the defiance in my eyes. She will get her victory. She always wins these battles. I know it, she knows it. But one day, one day she will not."

Anya, orphaned at a young age lives under the harsh rules of her Aunt along with Eva, her Shadow. Her aunt efficient in her punishments takes it too far and Anya needs to break free. But does she have that inner strength, is she really able to escape? Living in a desert landscape where she is treated as a slave, Anya longs to be cherished. Punished for the final time by having to have an arranged marriage to a brutish man, Anya and Eva make their escape.

Despite the harsh environment of the desert, they make it across to the neighboring town. There, they change their names and Anya sadly thinks that maybe she is nothing after all. With all the hardships thrown at them - poverty, lack of food, no home - they succeed only for it to be threatened. Will Anya ever feel that she belongs and more importantly, be loved and cherished?

A remarkable and captivating story, Anya's plight to leave her Aunt's ferocity behind and start a new life is so absorbing. Told from the young girl's point of view, Brooks has created a character who shows such determination and courage despite being so mistreated that it is inspiring. The other people met are just as well defined and add so much depth and realism to this novel.

Although Brooks is not explicit in where the story is set, it does not detract from Anya and Eva's plight. I really enjoyed this and read it in less than a day. I didn't identify with the characters as such but it didn't

matter as they all combined to make a fascinating story. Brooks style and language is easy and flows seamlessly from one chapter to the next. As the first in a trilogy, *Girl in the Glass* left me with some questions - what happened to Frank, the man they met in the forest and is her Aunt looking for her? All of which I'm sure will be answered in *Love of Shadows*, due to be published in summer 2012. I look forward to it. A recommended read.

I received a complimentary copy of this book from the author for review. The opinions expressed here are my own and I am not required to give a positive critique.

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## **Arlena says**

By: Zoe Brooks

Published By: Z.B.

Age Recommended: Adult

Reviewed By: Arlena Dean

Rating: 5

Book Blog For: GMTA

Review:

"*Girl In the Glass*" by Joe Brooks was the first book in the 'Shadows Trilogy.' I found this novel '*Girl in the Glass*' heart wrenching, even sad and angry then it has a way through this read to lift your 'spirit and then cheer for all of it in this journey that Anya and Evan went through in a unhappy childhood to now becoming a woman. This author did a wonderful job with her description she used in this good novel. At time you are able to feel the sand and even smell the salty air.

What was "*Girl in the Glass*" about...

"Anya, orphaned after the death of her father and her healer mother and forced to endure a young life in servitude to her wicked aunt. The huge family home she lives in (in a town on the edge of an impassable desert) is her world and her prison, that is until Anya and her twin/Shadow Eva escape."

the type of life she lived before the escape....

"I will have to say it: 'I am Anya and I am nothing'. I will look down at the floor as I say it, so that I don't see the smile on my aunt's face, so she won't see the defiance in my eyes. She will get her victory. She always wins these battles. I know it, she knows it. But one day, one day she will not."

Punished for the final time by having to have an arranged marriage to a brutish man, Anya and Eva make their escape and this is where I will say you must pick up this excellent read to see where the author will lead Anya and Eva.

The characters were well developed and likable and some I couldn't identify with them at all but it was a fascinating story none the less. There were some questions left unanswered but I am sure it will be answered in '*Love of Shadow*.'



I found this novel a remarkable and captivating story that once you got in it from page one, you will not want to put it down until the end. This was definitely a read of a survival in a world where there will be any odds stacked against them but "who show there is strength in friendship and servitude."

Would I recommend? YES!

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## **Tuesday says**

For more reviews, check out my blog:

[www.ravenous-reader-book-reviews.blogspot.com](http://www.ravenous-reader-book-reviews.blogspot.com)

It doesn't happen very often, but every now and then a book comes along and I don't ever want to get to the last page. I start getting upset when I realize that the end is near, because I don't want my time that I've spent with new people who have entered into my heart to end. Luckily for me (!!!) *Girl in the Glass* is the first book in the *Shadows Trilogy*. Whew! I was afraid that I'd have to head East to Czech Republic, knocking on old farmhouse doors to find Ms. Brooks and tell her that Anya and Eva's story was amazing, but I needed to know more!

Amazing really isn't the right word for *Girl in the Glass*. It's heart wrenching, it's sad, it makes you angry, and it lifts your spirits and makes you cheer out loud. It makes you cry and it makes you wonder. It takes you on a journey with Anya and Eva through their unhappy childhood to them becoming women.

It's a journey of epic proportions that many of us who are sitting in our comfortable air conditioned homes can't even begin to imagine. We turn a blind eye to things like this happening as we sit in our comfy cocoons of fancy furnishings, never wondering where our next meal will come from. We don't have to worry about keeping warm enough at night, and we certainly don't have to sell our souls attempting to make a better life for ourselves.

Ms. Brooks put so much description in *Girl in the Glass* that at times I could feel the sand and smell the salty air. I could feel the snow and see the stars and smell the beautiful smells of luxurious perfume and taste the wine and feel the physical and emotional pain that Anya and Eva felt.

If you are looking for something different than what you normally read, something that will make you cry tears of sorrow and tears of joy then pick up *Girl in the Glass* by Zoe Brooks. You won't be disappointed, and you'll be ready to hunt down the next book in the trilogy!

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## **Georgia says**

*Girl in the Glass* is a story about two girls, Anya and her Shadow Eva. In this world, Shadows are people

who aren't human, but look mostly like us. As far as I can interpret, they look human, but give off an air that makes it obvious they aren't. They are a little reminiscent of the demons from Philip Pullman's Northern Lights series. However, not everyone in this world has a Shadow and a lot of prejudice follows them around. The main similarity is that Shadows are like a conscience, always doing the right thing and ever practical, but with no emotions to cloud their judgements. This makes for very interesting reading, watching the differences between how the two girls react and change depending on the situations they're presented. Eva is always steadfast, but Anya (in a very human way) is corrupted and can sometimes even be unlikable and cruel.

Set in the desert town of Darkan, the story starts with a 12 year old Anya and spans a few years. It's broken into three parts and in each one of these the two girls have a new identity. In the first part, Anya is dealing with the deaths of her parents from the plague and now lives with a very abusive family, with her aunt at the head. We follow her through her journey of not only growing up, but also watching her try to find her freedom and happiness.

One of the main praises I have is the writing style, specifically the descriptive writing. The scenes are laid out so well, the imagery is fantastic and the emotions weaved in are amazing. This is one of the few books I have read where I could feel the tension throughout. Whether it be from fear of a person, fear of discovery or even something as simple, but terrifying as poverty. As well as this tension, there is also a constant feel of defiance throughout, against the people who hurt her, against harsh environments and against life itself. The unwillingness to give up or give in that makes Anya such a great character to follow.

Overall, I really enjoyed this read. It is the first in a trilogy and the second (Love of Shadows) came out this month. You can bet I will be following the progress of this series to its conclusion.

Disclaimer: I was sent this book by the author. This is not a sponsored review. All opinions are 100% my own.

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## **Megan Broutian says**

Review posted on my blog: <http://www.meganblogs.com/girl-in-the...>

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## **Kathy says**

Girl In the Glass by Zoe Brooks is a Gem. Orphaned at the age of ten, Anya and her shadow Eva are forced to live/work at her aunts house. Her aunt hates her and forces her to work and punishes her severely for even the most minor transgressions. She lives in a different world and her dessert home is often cruel and the society she lives in even crueler when you are taught that its always the woman's fault. Anya has to escape this life as it will surely kill her. Eva and Anya escape and make the long trek through the dessert to make it into the city, where she learns that life in the city is almost as cruel as her aunts house.

This was a tough read for me, as a mother of three my heart broke for Anya to be beaten constantly, emotionally and physically. Anya is a child who just needs to be held and loved, and she can't find solace in anyone. Eva is being taught to touch and show emotion as that is what her mistress needs, but Anya knows how much it pains her to do so. I found it difficult to read at times. With that said I thought it was really well

written. It definitely reminds you how different cultures are. I will definitely read the next in the series when it is made available. This book is not for everybody and i`m sure there are a few people that would not be able to read through some of the abuses.

I was gifted a kindle copy of this book in exchange for an honest review.

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### **Teresa says**

I really enjoyed this book. The characters are well defined and it's easy to become immersed in the story. I look forward to reading the second and third of this trilogy. I'm sure I'll eventually read them again if the next two are as good as this one.

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### **Lily at Bookluvr's Haven says**

Originally published on Bookluvr's Haven

This book was epic, and by far this year, one of the best books I have read.

Yes... I said it! One of the best books I have read this year.

I am the retriever, and this book is my ridiculous, gigantic, prehistoric sized bone.

I am gushing. This is why:

1. The writing is phenomenal. It was almost poetic. Scene after scene just flowed, one after the other, filled with an array of emotions that was truly a roller coaster ride.

Example: Anya is punished by her evil, rotten aunt by being shoved and locked into a cupboard/closet for 5 days. 5 DAYS!!! What is impressive about this is that the writer had me absolutely riveted through each single moment of these scenes... of a girl locked in a closet for 5 days. WHO CAN DO THAT??!!!! Zoe Brooks can and did!!

2. Character development was superb. Each character, no matter how small of a role he/she played was explored enough to give you an inside glimpse of who they are. You understand their actions, their decisions, you empathize for some, you absolutely can't stand others. I wished death on a couple. I teared up a few times. How much more invested can one be?

3. World building was great. You may not know the city, and you may not be intimate with the culture, but you definitely feel like you could navigate through it with familiarity. As a reader looking in, you feel like you are in each single place. Whether you are alongside Anya, and her 'shadow' in her aunt's home, or following them through the dangerous desert, or through the streets of the city they try to survive in.

If I could have read this in one sitting I would have. It was not for lack of trying. The ride this book takes you through is riveting and seductive, and I had a very difficult time putting my kindle down for any reason. I walked into a couple of walls trying to read a few more words, honestly.

The 'Shadow' was an interesting concept. Erin (my co-blogger and awesome friend) and I have discussed this a couple of times, trying to figure it out... what exactly is a 'Shadow'? Anya's shadow, Eva, was as intriguing as our main character. She seems human enough. She interacts with other characters, and they with her. She is sweet, kind and incredibly intuitive and intelligent, though her behavior is perceived otherwise. But 'Shadows' are not seen very favorably. Maybe the fact that it is not fully spelled out for you is part of the magic. But I have a theory that it may be the latest born in a set of twins. But I won't have confirmation unless I continue this series, and hope that Zoe Brooks gives me a little more info.

Did I just write 'Series'? Oh yea!! Very exciting, since I didn't want this book to end! But it did (big sad face goes here) and I will have to patiently wait for the next installment! ARGH!!

I would recommend this novel to ANYONE willing to try something new, or if this book sounds right up your alley. Because it left a huge impression on me. I am keeping my fingers crossed, and my eye out for a hard copy, because I would want to get one for my collection, and I imagine that it will be worn down over time. Otherwise, I may wear out my kindle page turning buttons, as I can see myself re-reading this, and I don't do that with many books.

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