



## Wolfskin

*W.R. Gingell*

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‘If you want adventure, you have to march right up to it and kick it in the shins . . .’

At fourteen, barefoot and running wild, Rose is delighted to be apprenticed to Akiva, the witch of the forest. She thinks it will be all enchantment and excitement, and not so much fuss about baths. The reality is much more sober and practical- that is, until she meets a mysterious wolf in the forest and is tricked into stepping off the path . . .

In young, naive Rose, Bastian sees a way of escape. Cursed to remain in the shape of a wolf after running afoul of a powerful enchantress, he has lived many decades under a spell, and now he is both desperate and ruthless. But by breaking part of Bastian’s curse, Rose has caught the attention of Cassandra, the enchantress who cursed him: and Cassandra is by no means ready to forgive and forget.

Meanwhile, wardens have been disappearing from the forest, one by one. Rose is certain that Cassandra is behind the disappearances, but can she and Bastian get to the bottom of the matter before Akiva disappears as well? And are Bastian’s motives entirely to be trusted?

Sometimes the little girl in the red hood doesn’t get eaten, and sometimes the wolf isn’t the most frightening thing in the forest.

## Wolfskin Details

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Author : W.R. Gingell

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## From Reader Review Wolfskin for online ebook

### Kenley Davidson says

I'm a fairly picky reader, so I often close a book feeling a slightly unsatisfied and wanting just a little something "more." Not this time. Wolfskin is probably one of the best books I've read in the past year, and I am very glad to have discovered this lovely retelling of what seemed to be a blend of two familiar fairy tales -- Little Red Riding Hood and Snow White and Rose Red.

The most charming and magical thing about this story is its protagonist, Rose, who may have spent much of the first part of the book doing rather mundane things (much to her own dismay), but her narrative voice was so unique and engaging that I found myself willing to follow her anywhere she wanted to go, just to listen to her tell me about it.

The character arcs were beautifully handled, even though they spanned several years time, and did a fantastic job of displaying the changes taking place as the characters grew and matured. I particularly appreciated the author's ability to create fully drawn secondary characters who are every bit as real and complex as the protagonists.

While there were not really any surprises and the ending had a few hiccups, I loved this book and would happily recommend it.

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### Ashley says

#### You can see this and other reviews on my blog: Book Nerd Paradise

Honestly, in the beginning I was a little unsure about reading and reviewing Wolfskin by W.R Gingell. Now that I'm in my mid-20s (sigh... getting older) I tend to lean more toward stories with slightly older characters or NA fantasy. I find that I can relate more toward characters that are closer to my age.

So with that in mind, I did get a little frustrated with the main character and her childish reaction to things. She was a little bit whiny and pouty. However, then I reminded myself that I was a little brat at 14 too, and I started to really enjoy the story once I got that out of the way.

What's good. The story itself was excellent. It wasn't anything like I had expected at all, which is always refreshing to see in a fantasy. Our main character, Rose, has a lot of learning to do in her apprenticeship and we learn right along with her. I found myself confused at times by what was happening, but it made me connect with Rose more, since she was struggling to understand everything at the same time I was.

The characters were new and refreshing. After I got over my initial dislike of Rose, I came to love her energy and curiosity. It reminded me a lot of myself at that age.

Then there's Akiva, the guardian witch Rose is apprenticed to. She's not your typical lovey, doveя fairy godmother. She's a tough, no nonsense old broad. She really makes Rose work for everything and never just

gives her the answer to whatever problem she's facing.

Lastly, we have Bastian. His character is very drawn out through the novel. When we meet him, he's a conniving, vicious wolf who's about to eat Rose on their first meeting. After she breaks the first part of his curse, we don't see that much of him. Rose runs into him here and there, but he doesn't really play a bigger part until the second half of the novel.

What could have been better. The pacing was a little off for me. Sometimes it would take an entire chapter to go through a few days. Other times it was months down the road within a few sentences. To me, it didn't quite flow as well as it could have. I like it better when there's a consistency to the timeline.

I would have liked to have seen more of Bastian in the beginning half of the novel. After Rose broke the first part of the curse I thought he'd be around more. He still had two more parts to the curse but didn't seem to be in a hurry to break them.

Overall, I gave *Wolfskin* a rating of 4/5 because I really, really enjoyed the storyline. The few things that I didn't like were very minor and didn't take away from the book as a whole. I'll definitely be recommending this one.

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\*\* I was provided a copy of this book in return for an honest review

### **Kathryn says**

I found this to be a very fun read. It's basically a fairy tale retelling of Red Riding Hood with a little bit of Beauty and the Beast mixed in for good measure. Although the story starts with these very obvious roots, there's quite a lot of storytelling and author invention that take this retelling in different directions.

I would definitely put this under the YA umbrella, but that's not a bad thing. The protagonist, Rose, or Cutlass Rose as she would prefer, is introduced as a tomboyish young teenager (13 or so). There is definitely a romance subplot, but it stays relatively sweet rather than anything explicit.

The book has quite a bit of nature/forest based magic in it, with Rose's mentor being Akiva, the witch of the forest. As you come to find out pretty early in the book, each of the areas of the forest have wardens to watch over them and Akiva is one of the wardens. There's an element of mystery in the book tied up with the wardens and the forest magic, but I don't like giving spoilers in reviews, so I'll leave it at that!

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It was a good read and I would recommend it. It reminds me a bit of Anne Bishop's *The Others* series which starts off with *Written in Red*, so if you enjoyed that, I would definitely suggest giving *Wolfskin* a read.

### **Lana says**

4.5 Stars

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This book was lovely! I adore fairy tale retellings, and this one didn't disappoint. I enjoyed mainly Rose's

personality, her stubbornness and constant crossness, but another thing that I really loved was the magic. It was interesting and new to me..."forest magic," but described much more deeply than that. Threads of magic running through the forest and nursery rhymes and all of it was wonderful. Not all of the rules/limits were explained, but I had the feeling the author knew them and it was only Rose who doesn't know them yet.

I enjoyed that the book spanned 2-3 years, which gave it a more fairy-tale-ish feel and it was a bit of a coming-of-age story for Rose. I loved Akiva and how much she taught Rose and how much I loved her despite her grouchiness...she's a character that I've seen before, in other novels, but I still can't help but love them no matter how many times they're used.

I really liked the romance and Rose's no-nonsense approach to it all. She didn't think anyone loved her, but she wasn't annoyingly self-deprecating in that regard. In fact, she didn't care at all, and that was what I really loved about her. She didn't care what anyone thought about her looks--only what they actually thought about her, and I appreciated that immensely.

I found the ending a little bit odd, hence the 4.5 star rating rather than 5 stars, but I didn't dislike it. It was just a bit different and unexpected, and it didn't detract much from the novel as a whole--I still loved it and I'm glad I bought it and that I can enjoy it again at some point.

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### **Denae Christine says**

**Reader thoughts:** Oh, this was as good as the other Gingell books. I should go read them all.

I was skeptical about reading this book because it just didn't sound interesting. A tom-girl living in the forest? A cursed wolf? I had no idea there would be gryphons and wardens and leafy hood anchors and village dances with dryads and deep forest off the paths. I have no idea if there was much of a government or taxes or anything beyond the village and forest, but I loved the ideas the readers did see.

Bastian is a bit old for Rose, but at least he has been cursed. Maybe he's not really that much older.

I loved the end with the tricky magic hut and curse breaking and forest revenge. There was just a splash of romance and nothing inappropriate. Nothing too violent, either.

Every character has their own personality, which I like, even the salamander and the garden patches. It was a fun magic system (not quite spooky) but still serious (not funny). We spend only a little time with Rose's sister and mother, and yet they feel like real people anyway.

**Writer thoughts:** I love how firmly inside the characters's heads we are. If the MC is confused, so is the reader. If she is in the middle of indescribable magic spells, then she won't waste paragraphs explaining nonsense to the reader. You just know there are forest threads and deeper forest and black curse lines and a sort of tricky sentience to the wardens. How does it work? I don't know, but it still makes enough sense.

And that's the point. The reader doesn't have to understand how to make a trap with ropes and trees (which took pages to explain in the otherwise excellent Dragon and Herdsman). We just need to know "Draycos used rope and tree branches to make a trap."

Readers don't need every detail in building a robot barrier/brake for the spaceship (like in the otherwise

excellent Moon Racer). We just need to know Tyce and Ashley "used robots and a welder to slow down the spaceship."

Okay, sometimes the details are interesting (like in The Martian), but sometimes I just want what happened without the how.

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### **Intisar Khanani says**

Another fun story by Gingell, though I felt the main villain was pretty one dimensional (but then, that's true in many books). The romance developed very gradually and sweetly, which was hilarious to read considering how hard one of the characters was trying to move things along. There was also the possibility of a love triangle, also done fabulously as our heroine is so wonderfully oblivious to such nonsense. Overall, while this is not one of my favorite reads by Gingell, I stayed up late reading it, and can definitely say I enjoyed it.

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### **Julia says**

First of all for anyone curious about the reading length the reason why it took me so long to read this book is that my job took away any leisure reading that we could do when we are slow and so being at work an additional 3.5 hours each morning is a ruckus to my reading schedule.

Past personal life, though, the book had me caught with the idea that it a take of Little Red Riding Hood who is right now my fairytale heroine of the time. I was curious to see how this was going to turn out and if it would stick with the more well-known story or veer along something like the movie "Red Riding Hood". Instead "Wolfskin" tends to stand in a class of its own.

There are a few slow bits within the book but the antics of Rose will keep you busy trying to figure out what she is up to while I felt that Bastian had been stolen of some more roles within the story itself. And in some parts especially with her bubbly sister and the constant dances the story seemed a bit redundant.

Otherwise I love the strong characters, the imagination that it took to make the book and the beautiful weaving of all the components. And I am glad that this wasn't just another werewolf style book in a reading world that tends to the shifters and witches. Makes me wonder how the other fairytale based books turn out....

\*\*Received this book as part of the Giveaways at Goodreads.com for free in exchange for a review\*\*

~A Book With Magic\*

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### **Mariela says**

I Requested a copy of Wolfskin through Xpresso Book Tours for a Fair review, and I am glad I did!

I loved this book since the beginning . I requested it because of the cover, yes I am the kind of person that judges a book by the cover. And this cover is beautiful and it does justice to the story.

This is a high fantasy book. I love the characters, I love the forest. My favorite was Akiva that witch was so mysterious all the time and so grumpy .

Bastian : I loved him! his relationship with Rose was unique.

Rose: another great female character that isn't whining and crying. And I loved that her goal was to be a pirate! hahaha

This reminds me a little bit of The Beauty and the Beast too, only because of the course Rosa had to break. The perfect fantasy book, the writing was beautiful. I hope there is a sequel I want to read more adventures of Bastian and Rose.

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### **Sage Knightly says**

*Wolfskin* is full of magic, witches, curses, power, action, romance, a cursed wolf, a bitter Enchantress, spells, growth, strength, trust, and bravery. It's about a young girl seeking out adventure who becomes an apprentice to a witch, who ends up breaking the first part of a wolf's curse, who learns spells and magic, and tries to figure out who is behind the missing Wardens and why they're doing it. It's about a fourteen year old girl maturing and growing into a young woman who finds love, friendship, and family. It's about Rose's adventures and the situations she gets into because of her naivety. It's a tale you'll surely love.

See my full review here: [Fishing For Books](#).

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### **Jen says**

When I finished, I decided to try something else by Gingell. I decided on *Wolfskin*.

First, I need to mention that the *Masque* and *Wolfskin* are distinctly different in style. Both are retellings of familiar tales, but the approach is completely different. *Wolfskin* has a more traditional feel to it, and yet it, too, veers drastically from the original tale of Red Riding Hood.

Truthfully, Gingell's reimagining takes little more than the idea of a young girl and a dangerous wolf and develops an entirely new tale that draws on more than one fairy tale theme.

At seven, Rose decided she would be a bloodthirsty pirate with the name Cutlass Rose. At fourteen, Rose is a feisty tomboy who, in spite of living in a loving family, has dreams of adventure. She finds domestic duties cumbersome and boring and longs for daring exploits.

When her mother finally agrees to apprentice her to the local forest witch Akiva, Rose is delighted, hoping for magic and excitement. Initially, Rose is disappointed not to sense the magic she expected. Discovering that hard work in the garden is one of her chores, she despairs of her dreams of adventure.

And then she meets the wolf in the forest and steps off the path....

I liked *Wolfskin* even better than *Masque* and plan to read much more of W.R. Gingell!

Kindle Unlimited.

Fairy Tale/Fantasy. 2015. print version: 300 pages.

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### **Jan says**

I had a little trouble getting into the story, but once I did I loved it! I really like the way the author puts new twists to the Little Red Riding Hood story.

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### **Diane says**

#### **Rose grows into a great woods-Warden in this fun [fairy]tale**

When the book starts, Rose is very much a child, young even for her thirteen years, and at first I wasn't sure that Gingell would convince me that the girl was ready for a serious romance (HEA) by the time it happened, but the relationship between Rose and her dangerous wolf develops gradually while Rose herself develops knowledge and responsibility as Akiva's apprentice. She remains convinced for a long time, though, that the idea of anyone having a genuine romantic interest in her (instead of her flirtatious village-belle sister) is ridiculous; in a way, this conviction gives her an ease that crushes the wolf's pretensions and manipulations.

There's an unusual interval where Rose's experiences have little to do with physically growing up, but exploring the magical nature of her forest-bound world (sorry to be cryptic, but this is the best I can do); Gingell's world-building feels rich enough to allow plenty of further discoveries. When the forest becomes a more dangerous and less contented place, straining under the shocking disappearances of several Wardens, Rose naturally refuses to simply sit back and stay safe, especially since she suspects the same powerful woman who cursed the wolf of being involved in this wide-scale wickedness. I don't want to get into spoiler territory, so I'll stop with that.

Not every move Rose makes is wise, but I can happily say that she's NOT one of those TSTL heroines that make me groan, "She's not seriously going to ... She is!" As usual with Gingell's fantasies, I enjoyed spending time with her cast of characters, from Rose herself and the wolf/man called Bastian (who becomes less self-serving despite his desperation to break his curse), to the crusty Akiva (whose idea of teaching is often simply giving Rose opportunity and reason to discover for herself how the living magic works), to Rose's family, friends, and village beaux for her and sister Gwendolyn -- and perhaps even their widowed mother.

I do need to get at typing up a list of the minor goofs I noted -- several cases of I-should-be-me and a few other things -- to pass on for correction, but they were neither confusing nor frequent enough to take me out of the story, so I have no hesitation about recommending it to anyone who wants a light and young-at-heart (but teen-angst-free) fantasy.

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### **Jenny Koch says**

A lovely story loosely inspired by Little Red Riding Hood. I appreciated the fact that the romance was very,

very slow to develop (given the heroine's young age and the hero's need for personal growth).

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### **J.M. Stengl says**

Another favorite Gingell story, this one sort of a retelling of Red Riding Hood, and sort of its own thing. Which is good any way you look at it!

I loved Rose as the viewpoint character. She has so much personality--not all of it positive!--and is totally oblivious to the romantic intentions of the males in her life, all of which brings this story to life even while Rose is doing ordinary tasks around Akiva's cottage and starting to learn her place. I enjoyed the story arcs for her sister and mother as well.

Bastian is terrifying and creepy at first, but he grows as a character until I loved him to pieces. I liked his rival too, but once Bastian "grew up," the other guy didn't have a chance with me.

Whether I can predict the endings or not, Gingell's books keep me glued to the page with no desire to look ahead! Which means I trust her to tell a great yarn from beginning to end.

Another highly recommended story!

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### **MB (What she read) says**

3.5 stars. I liked the forest setting.

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