



Oaken

Melody Robinette

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When 17-year-old Autumn Oaken and her twin brother Luke find their parents brutally murdered, they are soon summoned by their grandfather who lives not in another city, but in another world called the Underground—home to all magical creatures seeking refuge from humankind.

The twins journey into the Underground, discovering that they are not only elves, but “royals”...and that their bloodline is in danger of extinction at the hands of the evil elf Vyra Vaun, their parents’ murderer. Living in a skyscraper tree called Arbor Castle, the twins seek to join the Warriors, a group of elves who fight to defend the kingdom and to stop Vyra and her malevolent followers.

But Autumn soon becomes distracted, locked in an elfin love triangle with forbidden, golden-haired Avery and brooding, green-eyed Victor, who has a dark secret. She realizes she must make a choice. Little does she know her decision could very well mean the difference between life and death for all of the Underground.

Oaken Details

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Author : Melody Robinette

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From Reader Review Oaken for online ebook

Jennifer says

I wanted to like this. I really did. I thought the premise sounded intriguing. But the writing style was a complete turn-off. Incredibly juvenile and bland, the narration caused me to put the book down halfway through chapter 7. An excerpt:

" 'Arbor Lake.' Crystal said. 'It's where everyone our age goes for fun. And school starts back Monday so I'm sure nearly the whole school will be there.'

Luke's eyes lit up. 'Will, uh, will there be girls there?'

Crystal giggled. 'Of course, and I'm sure they'll all be quite interested to talk to the new prince.'

'Who's that?' Luke asked.

'Er...you," Crystal said.

'Oh. Right. Then what are we waiting for?' "

Add to that the use of the word "ginormous" (and NOT in dialogue, in a description) and you have a general feel for the puerile style of writing.

High school aged twins are uprooted from their entire lives and discover they are really royal elves from a magical underworld realm and their reaction is simply, "Whoa, way cool, let's live here now and check out all the HOT ELVES, WOO!"

I normally read YA books too. I enjoy the light, fast reads, as a working mom it fits with my schedule better than, say, Game of Thrones. Which I've read too, but I'm just saying that that is not my normal fare. This book is set with high school age characters but written at about a 6th grade level. I just couldn't get into it, and couldn't bring myself to care about the characters.

All the stereotypical characters have made their appearances:

- Young main characters who discover there is more to them than they knew.
- Mysterious benefactor (and newly discovered relative)
- Down to earth, average girl who they befriend upon arrival.
- Dreamy mysterious boy who the female lead feels an immediate romantic draw towards.
- Popular, pretty "queen bee" enemy character
- Major nemesis OUT TO GET THEM.

No originality, cookie-cutter characters. I was hoping for a new imagining on elven culture, but the elves are essentially beautified humans with fancy powers. There IS no "elven culture"...it's just glorified human culture. Boring. I made myself keep reading a few times, but....no. Not even worth finishing. Sorry.

Elizabeth Jane says

This was a enjoyable read with refreshing changes from other elven-centric paranormal novels: 1) The elves and other magical creatures live in a hidden world (the Underground) away from humans. 2) They all have a Power that presents itself during adolescence. 3) The elves are not immortal but are very skilled at the healing arts. And 4) Warriors are chosen every five years from a slew of applicants which can include royals. I'm giving this novel 3.5 stars because the dialogue was more juvenile and stilted than I've ever heard from

present day 16-17 year olds. Also, the antagonist was annoying to read because of her constant "mad cackling". Her character was not fleshed out well and every scene involving her felt rushed. The climax of the main characters encountering her wasn't climatic at all. I was disappointed at how "easy" the scenes were wrapped up. It was interesting enough though. I'd read the next in the series to see what happens further down the road.

Monica says

Excellent read! Loved it! Well developed characters and plot. Strong female characters that wonderfully balance out the male characters.

Cassie says

Oaken will take you on a magical adventure that will you never want to come away from. Melody Robinette's dangerously addictive writing style will hook you, and string you along to the very end of the story. At the end, you will be left feeling like you were thrown back into your own life, but leave you wishing you could dive back into the world this author has created.

In this book lies a world that crosses the boundaries between the surface, and the Underground. It follows a cast of characters you can't help but connect with, and root for the whole way through. You follow the many triumphs and failures of the main characters, Autumn and Luke, as they discover their true abilities in this new realm. As a reader, you'll truly feel the emotions of all characters involved. I'm not afraid to say there were moments when I was so nervous my palms were sweaty, or when I was laughing out loud and smiling (despite the weird looks I received in real life), or that my heart ached for the characters.

I felt transported to a new, magical world in a way that I haven't been able to experience since Harry Potter (seriously!). The connection Autumn forms with Avery is not unlike the unbreakable bond experienced in K.F. Breene's Chosen. Those were my two favorite series (and will always be), but Oaken is now joining them atop my favorites list.

To Meldoy Robinette: you may be my new favorite author. Thank you for creating new worlds for readers to explore, and please, for everyone's sake, never stop writing!

I'll be diving into the second book in the series, Ash, as soon as I finish this post. I'm not ready to lose this new-found sense of wonder, as my hope is once again renewed that one day, maybe I can have some sort of magic of my own, I just need to explore enough to find it.

Vaun Murphrey says

The bad guys/girls have my first name as their last name = biased.

I've always had sympathy for the villain. I think they're the most interesting and tricky.

Due to the name alone I may cheer for the Vaun's versus the Oaken's.

Autumn Oaken grows in this first installment but when she's weak she makes me want to pull out my hair. Her very weakness allows some of the plot to move forward and causes preventable tragedy. When she's strong and stands up for what's right I'm inclined to whoop, "Finally!"

Luke Oaken is simple. He wants what he wants and at first he's a failure at getting it. Once in the Underground he begins to live his shallow dream. I'm hoping for his sake he wakes up.

Victor Lavigne is mysterious and dark. He's the bad boy everyone falls for and Autumn's compassion is a bit understandable here BUT she takes it farther than I ever would. In their relationship I find the kernels of real life abuse that the kind-hearted can let go on too long until they lose their sense of self and life, sadly.

King Olympus remains a remote figure and that makes me grieve for the loss. Somewhat like a Disney show or a half hour sitcom aimed at teens, the parents and authority figures make token appearances.

I think this is typical for YA and not a criticism.

If you'd like to read a young story with adventure, new lands and life forms then this is for you. Don't pick this book up as an adult and expect Tolkien. A quick read that entertains is what you will get and enjoy - not invented languages and stilted female characters. (Although I do love LoTR!)

Finally, Melody Robinette began this book's first draft when she was fifteen and I wish I'd had that kind of resolve at that age. My courage didn't exist then past short stories and poems. I applaud anyone who puts their heart on the page and let's others see it. It's hard and often unrewarding to do.

If you're game to read another's joy then I say pick this one up. ;)

Rene Averett says

While I didn't see anything indicating this was a YA novel, it definitely was and read like it was. I personally think it was geared to younger teen readers than most of the YA's I've read that can hold adult readers as well as teens. It started off well, then bogged down for a long time for me. It perked up at the ending, but I doubt I will continue the series. I think young teens will enjoy this book though. In many ways, it feels like a variant on "Harry Potter", only featuring elves.

Sofia Sundfors says

DNF 64%

I know I was warned about the lovetriangle, but I thought to give it a shot anyway; and in the beginning this book was great, it just didn't maintain that level of intrigue for me. Sorry, but I don't feel the need to know what happens to these characters or how the story end, which is way I DNF at 64%.

Patricia Burleson says

Great

I loved this book didn't want it to end. It has strong characters and a great story line. There is magic, mystery, elves, action and love. You will be transported to another place as you read. So grab it you won't be sorry and enjoy reading.

Megan Matthews says

Great read

I enjoyed the book a lot surprisingly ... It's a bit fast paced and I felt a bit rushed but overall worth a read

Lena Friesen says

Wonderful book! Filled with great characters and a new world! I loved reading about Autumn and The Underground. I can't wait for the next book!

Meghan says

I know this is going to be a series that hooks me. It's going to be another Harry Potter for me, as in I fondly reread it every year, think of the characters often, and quote the books.

Melody Robinette says

I won't rate this book seeing as how I wrote it...but I will say that this is my first book and because of this, it will always hold a special place in my heart.

As a writer and a woman, I strive to write strong female characters who are also flawed, and I think Autumn Oaken is no exception. She wants to help everyone and make others happy even when it means sacrificing her own happiness, which can be both a good thing and a tragic thing that gets her and her friends into trouble.

The Underground is my second home and I hope everyone enjoys living there as much as I do.

Raea says

I struggled to finish this book. It was an easy, light read, but the characters were ... Shallow?

Underdeveloped? I don't know how to explain it. The characters said the things you'd want them to say to be likeable, but yet it seemed forced and cheesy. Maybe it was because the characters were exactly how you expected them to be. I don't know. Overall, the book was just ok. I won't read the next one. I give this 2 stars.

Michelle Hillstrom says

Very well written story with lovable characters. I grew quickly attached to each character which caused me to read the whole book in twelve hours. I had to keep reading to find out what the characters were going to do next. I think this book has a little something for everyone -- adventure, fantasy, action, and romance. I can't wait to read the next book

Meredith Dohanyos says

A very enjoyable read, didn't want to put it down.
