



The Corner Store Witch

H.D. Lynn

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The Chronicles of Narnia but with more swearing, more katanas, and less allegory. It's nerdy, anime inspired fun for the whole family.

Leone owns Pulp Magic (Comics, Books, Games, & More). Angry customers are her biggest concern-until a man from another world literally drops into her shop. And oni have followed him. Leone defends herself with a magical staff, which marks her with powerful runes. Her supernatural tattoo sleeves make her desperately thirsty, yet practically allergic to water-and oh, they foretell the fate of the realms of demons, gods, and men.

With her four friends and inter-dimensional guide, Leone travels to the realm of the gods, searching for magical cosmetic surgery. She doesn't want to carry the fate of the world literally on her arms. But the truth she finds-of a war raging between worlds-changes her, challenges her.

What's a nerd to do with the fate of all worlds at stake? Ah yes, kick some demon ass.

The Corner Store Witch Details

Date : Published September 20th 2016 by Throw This Book at Me

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Author : H.D. Lynn

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Genre : Fantasy, Paranormal, Adventure

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From Reader Review The Corner Store Witch for online ebook

Jane Karina says

Thank you to Netgalley for providing me a free copy for an honest review.

Disclaimer: I am a minority in a western country (Asian), female, and a huge nerd (that means I roleplay, am an avid gamer, and love reading books). So if someone wants to say that I am being unfair because I just don't understand Leone and the author, then don't even try.

Honestly I chose this book to read because the blurb was so interesting, unfortunately it fell short. Very short. I was 15 pages in when I thought I should just give this up, but when I realised the book was only 131 pages long, I decided to go through with it to see if it got any better.

It did not.

This book is so underdeveloped it's almost funny. There are so many typos in this (is her name Shani or Shandi? She also misspelled it as 'roll play' and for someone whose character raves about roleplay and even played D&D in the book, this infuriated me so much that I almost threw my phone at the wall) and the plot is wholly underwhelming.

The book's blurb said that it was an 'inter-dimensional travel', yet they only traveled once, and even then it was to a very unfinished world. All I know about it is that there's a lake, a shrine at the top, then a village with a forest nearby. And everybody in it is Japanese (every anime/manga fans' dream, right? Right????). Sure it's meant to be reminiscent of Japan but from what I know, Japan is nothing like that. It feels like a cheap rip-off of Japanese culture, and just because you know the legend of Amaterasu and have a half-Japanese character in the book, does not excuse that.

The pace is so excruciatingly slow that I honestly thought that I accidentally downloaded only half the book. Imagine how robbed I felt when I got to page 131 and it said "End of book 1", when there wasn't even any plot and character development except for the fact that they're now in another world. The majority of the book is spent leading up to inter-dimensional travel, but nothing even really happens there. Now that I think about it, *There was no climax in the book*, at all. Nothing grabbed my attention at all, I finished the book in two hours by just skimming through to see if there was anything noteworthy, but there isn't. There is no action except for two scenes (even the action falls very short), the rest of the book is spent on the characters bitching.

That'd be great if the characters are interesting, but they're not. They're so unrealistic it makes me gag. Honestly, you see a weird dude falling out of nowhere and your first action is to play D&D with him? *Really?* I hated most of the characters so much because of how bitchy they were in such an unrealistic circumstance, that I don't think I've ever hated so many characters in a single book before. I liked Maya because she's actually useful since she knows the legend of Amaterasu and seemed rational, until I got to this part:

"Hey, how come Barbie gets the only other weapon?" Courtney snapped.

Maya frowned, giving a cute pout without effort. She said, "What's that supposed to mean--

that I'm white? My father is Japanese, you racist. I lived in Japan for six years. Do you think I speak Japanese by accident?"

I don't even get why the author included this in, it's a terrible way to put in background information, and also a terrible way to include ~diversity~ in her book. There is also no sort of character development anywhere in the book, they all just stay bitchy at each other.

Don't even get me started on the political activist messages this book is trying to send. The author tries to include a lot of diverse characters in the book, now don't get me wrong, that's great. But the execution is so poor that I'm actually rooting against the characters instead of being in awe of how amazing they are even if they're a minority.

Yes, author, I know Leone is an strong, independent, black woman and she is fully capable of running her own store, but you don't have to force-feed us every single page. It's mentioned that Shandi is on a spectrum (I assume a gender spectrum), but it's never explained or brought up again throughout the book (not even by Shandi herself), as if the author was just trying to get a cheap toss from the LGBT community for five seconds. There's also a kid (Jay I think his name was) who was a regular at Leone's store, and was mentioned that it's possible he came from a bad family background, yet nothing was explained as to why Leone thought so, leaving me very confused.

If you really want to see how to handle empowerment of minority classes, then I suggest reading the Eon duology. The author actually gets it down well, subtly slipping the differences between the female and male characters, as well as Eona herself being able to stand on her own when everyone thinks she's weak because she's female. *The Corner Store Witch* did nothing of the sort, Leone didn't even do anything special because it was all the staff's power, so I don't really get why we're supposed to see her as a strong heroine except for the fact that she runs her own store.

I would love to love this book if I could. I do, I really do, especially because I came into this story with such high expectations. It sounded so interesting, it still does. It has potential, but the characters, plot and setting need to be reworked from the ground-up, I'm sorry to say.

I'm also very wary of the book because of the Pokemon Go reference chucked in there, which meant that this entire story was written and published in 3-4 months (June to September). If this is a first draft instead of a published book, then you have work to do, but it's not impossible. If this *is* the finished product, then I would have to question if you actually got an editor (if you edited at all) if you're able to publish this in such a short span of time. Please, for the sake of your story and yourself, take as much time as you *need* to edit this as much as you can, you owe at least that much to your characters and your readers.

Melissa Souza says

**Thank you to Netgalley and the publisher for sending me an eARC in return for an honest review.

DNFed @40%

I just couldn't finish the book. From the blurb, the concept sounded great. There is a mix of Japanese magical

elements and RPG. Maybe those you love to play such games might like it. However, it just wasn't the right fit for me. I also found the plot to be very slow moving and the characters were not very memorable. There were also plenty of grammatical errors.

Fangs for the Fantasy says

Despite considerable parental disapproval, Leone runs her own comic shop. She's a geek and she's gleefully happy as such along with her friends Courtney and Shadi

But even in their geekiest dreams, they never expected and actual dimensional traveller to fall from the ceiling, carrying a magical staff

Soon they find adventures and dungeon crawls are so much more fun with 20 sided dice than they are in the real world, with oni, dimension hopping and ominous prophecies promising troublesome side quests

I feel that this book is a prequel to the greater story. Clearly the meat of the story is going to happen when Leone, her sister and her friends reach Abinar's home. This means this whole book kind of feels terribly rushed to get to that point.

We have Abinar drop in from the alternate world and everyone... kind of just runs with that. People seem to accept it extremely quickly. Yes someone just appearing from nowhere is a little odd – but “he's a wizard from another dimension because of how he's dressed” is a bit of a stretch. Especially since absolutely no-one really asks him questions – not where he's from, not why he's there, not what he wants – they just kind of take him in.

This whole part of the book is frustrating, they take him home and play D&D – we're establishing the geek credentials of the cast, but someone just appeared from nowhere and you decide to play tabletop RPGs rather than ask him any questions at all? It just makes no sense

The whole story for a large chunk of this book feels forced as we're desperately railroaded to the other world. Abinar Just appears, they don't question him. Leone feels the need to take him home and keep him with her (why? She knows nothing about this guy!), which means she happens to be nearby when the bad guys show up, drop the markings of the Chosen One on her which leads happily to the prophetic dream with a nice guide on what to do next.

It kind of makes Leone not a very compelling character. She is certainly rare in the genre, a Black female protagonist and a Black female geek as well – geek culture is universally presented as white, straight and male – to have these very very very geeky Black female friends be central to the story is excellent. I like a lot about her – but so far her abilities and drive come from the woo-woo. I think it will be a lot lot lot better with future books because then we would be following the story for where the author wants to take and then get to see a whole lot more of her personality (and, don't get me wrong, I like what I've seen so far but I would love to see more of her when she's not scrambling and being driven by the plot itself). We do have some moments where Leone directly addresses race... but they feel a little... PSA-y at times.

Once Leone and her friends reach the other world, things pick up a little more. We have some world building, and a world setting with strong Shinto and Buddhist elements which I haven't seen a great deal. So far it's not especially deep (it's a little Wikipedia-ness at times) but it has only just being introduced

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Courtney says

This was a fast and enjoyable read: H.D. Lynn's writing style is compelling, fun to read and carries the story at just the right pace. At first, I was a bit unsure how the transition from Leone and her friend's daily life at the shop to their abrupt and unexpected introduction to magic would work out and come across in the prose, but I ended up loving how it was done. The change in circumstances prompted a noticeable shift, but the narration remained consistent and undisrupted.

I enjoyed the interactions between Leone, her friends and her sister so much that they kept me turning the page and I almost finished the whole book in one sitting: they were definitely a highlight for me and I'm looking forward to seeing how their relationships evolve further down the line. Leone's relationship with her sister Lakeisha felt both realistic and heartening, and the dialogue between her and her friends was my favourite part right from the start and was constantly good throughout. I'd give the characters a solid four out of five stars, but unfortunately I didn't feel the same attachment and interest in the general plot. However, I certainly didn't dislike the direction it took and can definitely see plenty of potential for its progression in the following book.

Though the character relationships and interactions shone the most, I am keen to see some more specific character development in the next book in the series too: although I liked Leone's, it felt like there was a lack of that for the others in comparison. Overall, I enjoyed the book a lot and am very excited for the sequel!

Review originally posted on my blog.

Barb (Boxermommyreads) says

Corner Store Witch is a really quick, really fun urban fantasy read. Leone owns a nerdy comic book store and has a zany group of friends and one really uptight twin name Lakeisha. While at work one day, a man dressed on cosplay gear crashes through Leone's work ceiling. Considering there was no physical damage to the ceiling meaning he materialized out of nowhere, the reader knows the story is not going to get any simpler. Leone quickly discovers Abinar comes from another land, bearing a stolen staff, which eventually triggers powers Leone didn't know she possessed and creates mystic burning tattoos on both her arms.

As I mentioned, this book was a lot of fun. There is a lot of diversity, including an Asperger character, and the story really plays on Japanese culture. It also mentions a lot of pop culture such as Tamora Pierce, Dr. Who and Harry Dresden, which I feel always makes a book a lot of fun. There is lots of action in the book and no real romantic elements which I know appeals to many. My only real complaint is the book is really

short. I don't feel the shortness harmed the story overall, but at times, it felt really rushed. Also, huge cliffhanger at the end. Well, not really a cliffhanger, it just basically stops, leaving the reader immediately wanting the rest of the tale.

If you like urban fantasy and diversity, then definitely consider "The Corner Store Witch." I received this book from Netgalley in exchange for an honest review and as part of Xpresso Book Tours.

Lulu // RoadsideReader says

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I have no idea what to make of The Corner Store Witch by HD Lynn. If this should be taken seriously or as a parody or both. I do know that the title and cover, both of which make this sound fantastic, were completely misleading. There is no witch, only a girl who gets tangled up in some mystical mess, and she certainly doesn't seem as well-versed or confident in her abilities as the girl on the cover. I cringed as 'nerd' pop culture mentions littered the first few pages and then again at the reactions of the girls at a random man landing in the shop.

The entire book seemed to be a parody of urban fantasy tropes and geek culture, and if it was, then I could understand it a bit better. Having girls at the center, especially non-white girls that were smart and educated, thrust in a medieval-esque adventure seems to be a twist on everything. Especially when the demon oni seem to be surprised and disgusted? at seeing a dark skinned girl. Considering they're demons and from a different realm, it doesn't make sense UNLESS it is a parody of the fact that racists like to say people of color can't play certain fantasy characters because they are "obviously white" or whatever other nonsense they spout.

But then, it takes itself seriously at other times and I wonder, is this for real? Am I supposed to take this seriously, as an actual urban fantasy novel? It's just too much, too over the top. Though it was under 200 pages, I honestly struggled to finish it. The only reason it got two stars was because I was a) able to finish it and b) it might work as parody.

Sorry to say but I think The Corner Store Witch by HD Lynn is going to have to be a pass from me.

// I voluntarily reviewed a complimentary copy of this title. //

Lake Reviews says

I would like to thank Netgalley and Throw This Book at Me for providing me with "The Corner Store Witch" for free, exchange for a honest review

Ok so we start the journey in Leone's store finding out about her and her friends. Continue onto a crazy guy dropping in with a magical staff. Now you would think that this is just another RPG(role playing game) story but it is much more than that. You have to read it to find out everything about what Leone goes through with her friends. It is a quick read and you could finish in a day or two easily. If you read or play DD(Dungeon &

Dragons) you would enjoy this a lot. Loads of action packed scenes with a kick-ass heroine. It is in third person point of view of main character Leone. Get to reading people while it is cheap and it is free for KU (Kindle Unlimited) users.

Celeste says

This book has a cute cover and a cool name, so I was expecting badassery and witchiness. I'm not sure this had any of that.

I love reading about witches and this book hasn't got any, strike one.

What it does have is a proud black woman/girl? of indeterminate age who thinks everything is about her color. I didn't realize demons and villagers from another plane of existence would care about the color of skin, especially seeing as how their red and orange and hairy af. They don't. And I found Leone's reiterating of the fact that she's black and female annoying. Strike two.

So the whole premise of the story is based on the fact that Leone grabs a magic staff to defend herself against oni and somehow ends up with tattoos of a deva. To remove the tattoos or maybe to follow her destiny she has to travel to the plane of the devas. Here she manages to get into a shrine that is supposed to be impossible to enter but she can because of her magic tattoos and she manages to take all her friends with her. She meets villagers, fights the same oni again and finds out she has to go visit a student of the original owner of the staff in order to remove the tattoos. And that's pretty much the whole story. Strike three.

Then of course there isn't any character development. Strike four.

The actions and reactions of the characters don't always make sense. Strike five.

The ending is abrupt and really you glean very little in 131 pages. Strike six. Actually forget the strikes, I've never watched baseball and I don't plan too. Much like the next two books in this trilogy.

I received a free copy of this book from the publisher through NetGalley.

Shekeilah says

It's really a short read. I had fun at the beginning because I thought "Cool! The main character doesn't take shit from anyone." So when the man appeared out of nowhere, I thought it will be the start of a great adventure. I didn't notice that I was actually near the end of the book without getting the taste of the adventure I thought it would have. And I was disappointed that there was no real climax that made me cling to every word.

I love that the author promotes all kinds of people and sexes but that's just it. There were a lot of grammatical errors (I'm not really a grammar police but it's noticeable here) and there were times I feel like I missed something that happened. I also didn't see/read how the world/s were built. Poof! It's just there and this is what the characters see. Sorry, but I don't live in the US. I don't know how it's like there. I also didn't grow up in another world. I just have an inkling about Japan because of all the things I watch and read and what people tell me about it.

I really wanted to love the book if I could. It's just that I think the author could still improve from these feedbacks. I think this is better than the book I last read though.

Subiksha says

original review@<http://www.covertocovertocover.info/>

3 Stars

Thank you to Netgalley for providing me a free copy for an honest review.

Love the cover of the book. This book is a quick read. We are introduced to Leone who owns Pulp Magic(books, comics, games and more) and her baseball bat. We get to see her interactions with her friends/employees. Then suddenly a man drops into her store. Leone and her friends have different reactions to the man from another dimension. The man has apparently stolen a staff from a dead monk which has brought him to earth and whoever touches the staff gets burned. Leone later realizes that demons have also entered the world along with the man. Later the staff marks her hand with a tattoo which gives her the staff's powers. She then later travels along with her 4 friends to another dimension in search of a solution to get the tattoo off her hand. The book shows us her journey to the inter-dimension

Now for the characters, Leone(shop owner),has anger issues and she wants to prove to others that she can own a shop at a very young age. Leone's three friends/employees-Courtney(lazy one), Shandi(the innocent one) and Maya(brainy one). Leone's twin sister Lakeisha is the successful sister and polar opposite of Leone. There are some parts in the book where the sisters have a good dynamic between them. The intentions of the mystery guy are still unknown. The book doesn't give a detailed character background. Would love to learn more about Leone's friends.

The book started out at an interesting pace but it became a little boring later in some parts of the book. Hope to see more character development in the sequels.

Sophie says

Netgalley Copy in exchange for an honest review.

Great novel with a lot of action, a fast-paced plot carried away by amazing characters. It was fun and funny, and I found it refreshing in the usual landscape of novels these days. Great style, great characters, I enjoyed this book.

Susan Angela Wallace says

The Corner Store Witch by HD Lynn is a sci-fi and fantasy and teens ya read. Leone owns Pulp Magic (Comics, Books, Games, & More). Angry customers are her biggest concern--until a man from another world literally drops into her shop. And oni have followed him. Leone defends herself with a magical staff, which marks her with powerful runes. Her supernatural tattoo sleeves make her desperately thirsty, yet practically allergic to water--and oh, they foretell the fate of the realms of demons,

gods, and men.

With her four friends and inter-dimensional guide, Leone travels to the realm of the gods, searching for magical cosmetic surgery. She doesn't want to carry the fate of the world literally on her arms. But the truth she finds--of a war raging between worlds--changes her, challenges her.

Fantastic read with great characters. I loved how all the girls stuck together. Can't wait to read more from this series. Highly recommended. 5*. Thanks to netgalley for the arc.

Ryan (miyu or Prada) says

A decent beginning to a new urban fantasy series. It is a light read that feels like a role-playing game campaign in story form and I imagine many folks will draw inspiration from it to add to their tabletop campaigns.

What I most enjoyed was the fact that decent female characters were front and center. It is a book I could see my daughter enjoying (when she is a little older) for that reason alone. The fact that the characters also had some racial diversity made me even happier.

S.L. Stacy says

The Corner Store Witch is a fun, quick read for anyone who enjoys YA fantasy.

Leone, self-proclaimed nerd and owner of the game store Pulp Magic, enjoys a pretty typical life until a stranger, dressed in wizard's attire and toting a magical staff, falls into her shop, seemingly out of nowhere. This is just the beginning of a new, exciting, and at times scary adventure for Leone, where she encounters the myths and magic she once only found in books and games.

The book is fast-paced, with just enough description to pull you into the world of The Corner Store Witch without dragging down the pacing. I enjoyed most of the characters, especially Leone and Abinar. They both popped off the page for me, and Abinar has some really funny fish-out-of-water scenes toward the beginning of the book. (It's okay, Abinar. I like McDonald's, too.) I also liked Leone's sister, Lakeisha, and their friend Shandi. I thought Courtney and Maya's characters could have been developed a little bit more, but otherwise I enjoyed the interactions between the main cast. The book follows this group of friends from Leone's Pulp Magic store to another, war-torn world, and the transition into this fantasy realm felt seamless. The Japanese-inspired mythology in the book was also neat and different (at least for me, maybe because I don't watch a lot of anime?).

The book is left open-ended, making way for future installments (but not with a cliffhanger that would make you throw your Kindle against the wall). Overall, an enjoyable read, and I'm looking forward to the sequel!

Tracie says

Title: The Corner Store Witch

Series: I'll Meet You at an Inn book 1

Author: H.D. Lynn

Genre: YA/Teens, Fantasy

Publisher: Throw This Book at Me

Publication Date: September 20, 2016

Thank you to NetGalley and Throw This Book at Me for providing me a copy of Corner Store Witch in exchange for my honest review

Synopsis:

Our story starts with Leone, who is a nerd and the owner of the gaming/book/movie shop Pulp Magic. Leone and her friends and sister are enjoying a normal day at the shop when seemingly out of nowhere a really unusual man in wizard garb drops through her ceiling with a magical staff. If that isn't weird enough, following him are the oni, demons come to kill and take the staff.

Leone grabs the staff to protect herself and her friends but it marks her with powerful and mysterious runes. This leads them to all go on an interdimensional journey to the world of the Gods where the goal is for Leone to save the world, and remove her marks.

What I Liked about this Story:

There were several things I loved about this book. It was quick paced and action packed. I flew through this story because it was addicting and because I was so excited to see what would happen next in the journey. I liked that the world building incorporated Japanese and Buddhist elements, such as the oni and the ruyi. It made it that much the easier to see the world in my head, and it made the world that much more unique and interesting. I think this story would make a great anime series. I was picturing the characters and world in an anime/manga style the entire time I was reading.

I also appreciated the diversity of the characters. Most of the characters were people of color, and Shandi, Leone's one friend, had an Autism type of disability. It's very rare in YA fantasy that you see characters of color, even more so a character with a disability. I also appreciated that the characters were not stereotyped. Leone was a nerd and successful shopkeeper, and her sister and her family were accomplished and intelligent. I also enjoyed the lack of romance in this book. I liked that Leone and the main male Abinar could be friends without having to fall in love. I also appreciated that besides Abinar, the cast of the journey was all female. In this way the story reminded me of the Rat Queens graphic novel.

What I Disliked about this Story:

There were a couple things I disliked about the story. I felt that this story could have been significantly longer and more drawn out. Because it was not, however, I felt that the characters fell flat for me. I could see glimpses of their unique and individual personalities, but as a whole they seemed a little one dimensional. I feel like with more pages, we could have seen more backstory into all of the characters and their relationship to Leone, and their personalities and feelings on the journey. I also felt the same with the world building. What we got so far was amazing to me, and maybe we will get more in depth in the next book in the series, but I would have loved to see more detail and explanation of the world, the war and the interdimensional travel. But I am so intrigued and can't wait to read the next book!
