



## Always a Witch

*Carolyn MacCullough*

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## **Always a Witch** Carolyn MacCullough

The adventures of Tam and Gabriel continue with more time travel, Talents, spy work, and of course, the evil Knights.

Since the gripping conclusion of *Once A Witch*, Tamsin Greene has been haunted by her grandmother's prophecy that she will soon be forced to make a crucial decision—one so terrible that it could harm her family forever. When she discovers that her enemy, Alistair Knight, went back in time to Victorian-era New York in order to destroy her family, Tamsin is forced to follow him into the past. Stranded all alone in the nineteenth century, Tamsin soon finds herself disguised as a lady's maid in the terrifying mansion of the evil Knight family, avoiding the watchful eye of the vicious matron, La Spider, and fending off the advances of Liam Knight. As time runs out, both families square off in a thrilling display of magic. And to her horror, Tamsin finally understands the nature of her fateful choice.

## **Always a Witch Details**

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## From Reader Review Always a Witch for online ebook

### Mundie Moms & Mundie Kids says

Reviewed by Sophie for MM's-

Well established weaknesses for me include: time travel, magic, stubborn girls and boys who always, but always do the right thing. Need I go on to add that yes, Carolyn, hit them all.

Let me start by saying that I completely admire Carolyn's ability to plot a two story arc and then gracefully execute it until the very last page when that one thing mentioned in the first book (that was oh so important) comes back full circle. Yes, I'm trying hard to keep this spoiler-free so forgive a true, fan-girly moment here. But this is not just a well written story with characters I want to spend time with in real life (remember the fan-girl warning) but it packs an unexpected action plot line and draws in characters from the first book with new ones from the second in such an elegant way that I couldn't help finishing the book in a day. I think the only word I had left when I closed the cover was "whoa". I was in shock at how Carolyn brought all these wonderful, detailed elements from Once A Witch around to the sequel and quietly led me down the path of her plot until piece by piece every single thing made sense to Tamsin and well, to me.

And don't worry, Mundie Moms, one of my favorite fictional boys ever, Gabriel, is still there. In fact here he is from page 12 when he and Tamsin are tempted to taste some of the sweets her mother is preparing for Rowena's wedding:

"Mhmm," I say, licking the icing from the corner of my mouth. "It's good. Even if it's probably poisonous. Go on, I dare you."

Gabriel narrows his eyes at me, then takes the remainder of the cake from my fingers and eats it in one gulp. "Some of it," my mother answers, inspecting a fork. "And stop hanging on the door," she admonishes absentmindedly. "It'll break again and I'm tired of having Chester fix the refrigerator. The last time he fixed it, it sang 'I'm a Little Teapot' every time opened it. It drove me insane."

Gabriel inhales on a laugh, then begins choking on cake crumbs. Alarmed, my mother whirls around. "Which one did you eat?" she cries.

"The chocolate flower one," I say, "Will he live?" I help myself to another cake, this one covered in sugar violets. "Is this one okay?" I ask, and then pop it into my mouth.

My mother closes her eyes briefly, "Yes."

"Yes I'll live or yes the second cake that she just ate is okay? It's kind of important that you be specific here," Gabriel says.

This quote also illustrates how much of this book is about family – past and present. They are all around Tamsin. They are part of who she was and is and well, they're definitely her mystery to solve. I can't emphasize how much I love them and their fierce loyalty to one another. It reminds me of my own family and I swear we have an Uncle Chester, too.

If you haven't picked up this series, don't wait, you've got to meet Tamsin, Gabriel, Rowena and yes, even the Knights. A huge thank you to Carolyn for making this Mundie Mom stay up way past her bedtime. It was worth every hour of lost sleep.

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### Gonca Özgül (Evetherneyse) says

Ne oldu?unu hat?rlam?yorum lakin kitab?n sonu beni çok üzümü?tü, o yüzden 2 puan...

## Kate McMurry says

Book 2 of the Witch Urban-Fantasy Series for Teens

Note: Please do not read this review if you have not read Book 1 of the Witch series, *Once a Witch*, because there will inevitably be spoilers for that book.

Once again 17-year-old Tamsin Greene's life is strongly influenced by one of her grandmother's prophecies, in this case that she will soon have to make a huge decision that could affect her family's very survival. After the events of *Once a Witch*, Tamsin has become fully aware of her enormous Talents as a witch. Other witches' magic has no affect on her (a common motif in many traditional fantasy novels, as well as an ability of Bella in *Twilight*, but still quite intriguing here), and if other witches use their magic against her three times, she absorbs, but does not steal, their ability (much like Peter Petrelli in the TV series, *Heroes*). She also knows that the evil witch family, the Knights, have a long-time blood feud with the Greenes, because the Greenes found a way to inhibit their magical power. The Knights are determined to get their magical power back, and they will stop at nothing, including murder, to accomplish their goal.

The action begins in Book 2 when Tamsin discovers that the villain from Book 1, Alistair Knight, has traveled through time to Victorian-era New York in order to help his ancestors wipe out Tamsin's before they can halt the Knight family's magical crimes. Tamsin is determined to go back in time just prior to Alistair's arrival and cut off his scheme, but she refuses to let anyone else get involved. If someone is going to be killed in this overwhelming mission, she is determined that the only loss of life will be her own.

Unfortunately, without her boyfriend Gabriel along as he was in Book 1, she can only manage a one-way trip to the past. She also doesn't have the assistance of his other crucial Talent of being able to find anything in her quest to locate and warn her Greene ancestors about Alistair Knight. As a result, Tamsin has no luck in her search for the Greenes, but she stumbles on the Knight family when she is offered a job as a lady's maid in the Knight mansion in New York City.

Tamsin quickly shifts direction and sets herself up as a mole within the Knight family in order to prevent the vicious matriarch of the Knight family, La Spider, from connecting with Alistair. Unfortunately, her task is made much more difficult when she is forced to resist the seductive charisma of the magnetically handsome and magically compelling Liam Knight, the eldest son of the family.

This book is not only a worthy successor to *Once a Witch*, but actually in many ways even better. Tamsin continues to be a dynamic heroine who is extremely sympathetic because of her willingness to sacrifice herself for the greater good. She is also a true survivor, as evidenced by her willingness to improvise and persist against overwhelming odds as she deals with the horrible Knight family in the 19th century, completely out of her element, cut off from all support.

The writing throughout this book is very well done, both as to the actual words on the page and the content of those words. The urban fantasy world-building continues to be well executed, the time travel element in particular. Tamsin's relatives and magical enemies are very convincingly portrayed, particularly Liam Knight. He is the best kind of villain, a multilayered one who is both attractive and repulsive at the same time.

In this book, unlike Book 1, Tamsin doesn't smoke, and though she does drink a beer that is offered to her in the 19th century, it is more as a thirst quencher rather than a mood-altering substance. However, Liam's

sexually seductive attitude toward all females, including Tamsin, may cause some parents to judge this book less suitable for pre-teens and younger teens than Book 1. The age range for YA extends from age 11-19 according to YALSA (the YA portion of the American Library Association), and I would personally peg this book as appropriate for the more mature end of that range, for teens 16 and above.

I grade the novel this way:

Heroine - 5 stars

Subcharacters - 5 stars

Fantasy World-Building - 4 stars

Writing - 5 stars

Magical Thriller Plot - 4 stars

Romantic Subplot - 4 stars

Overall – 4.5 stars rounded up to 5 stars

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## Vinaya says

Wow. Just wow. I did NOT see that coming. After I read *Once a Witch*, I remember saying that MacCullough's writing was pretty decent. Now I'm forced to swallow my words. It's not just decent, it's pretty damn good! In this sequel to *Once A Witch*, Tamsin must journey back in time to the New York of the 1880s to stop her family's enemies from regaining their power and destroying what the Greenes have spent a hundred-odd years building.

MacCullough seems to have a talent for historical fiction. The story moves much more smoothly in *Always A Witch*. The pacing is fast, the writing is tight and the plot is absorbing. I'm not saying that this book is a great work of literature. But I *am* saying that it's a worthwhile read. Tamsin is a likeable heroine who doesn't whine or angst or fall in love with multiple men at the same time. For someone who is supposed to have great powers, she seems remarkably level-headed. Also, on a side note, can I mention that, apart from Rowena, who does a good job of being the sister from Hell, Tamsin's family is adorable. I would actually have loved it if this book had taken a few extra pages and focused a little deeper on Tamsin's family dynamics. I want more Uncle Morry! Gabriel, however, seems to be strictly supporting cast, as in the first book. In fact, that is one of my minor complaints with regard to *Always a Witch*. In the interests of fast pacing, MacCullough seems to have sacrificed a certain amount of characterization, so we see very little of the family, or the conflict that Tamsin's super-powers are causing, and there is no fleshing out or deepening of her relationship with Gabriel.

There are several aspects of this book that are a little too smooth to be believable. Deus ex machina plays a big role in Tamsin's fortuitous entry into the Knights' house and her subsequent discoveries. "Of all the gin joints in all the world..." as Bogey would say. Also, her transition from modern-day New York to the New York of the 1880s is practically seamless. Please. If someone moved me from the city into a village, I would have trouble adjusting, but our heroine just breezes into another era and faces no constraints?

Overall, however, this is a book I would recommend for anyone looking for a well-written, fast paced read that's not too taxing on the brain. It all wraps up neatly, tied with a big, shiny bow and the reader is left feeling satisfied and positive. MacCullough's second offering trumps her first hands down.

I received this ARC from the publishers via Net Galley. No monetary or other considerations have affected this review, yadda yadda.

## **Kate (Nomalicious Reads) says**

More reviews can be found at my blog Nomalicious Reads

Always A Witch was a thrilling, sigh worthy read; a fantastic conclusion to Once a Witch.

Carolyn MacCullough tied all the ends off very nicely, and I'm sad that Tamsin's journey is now over :( But it ended so well that I can't complain.

Tamsin dealing with the social norms and bad guy,s in the nineteenth century definitely had its amusing moments as well as its heartwarming and shocking ones.

The bad guys, La Spider and Liam were amazingly, chillingly evil; Carolyn did an amazing job with them. At some moments, she had me on the edge of my seat anticipating what would happen next, hoping that Tamsin would survive working in their lair.

Gabriel.. is just so yummy! I would have loved to have seen even more of him and Tamsin, but really that's just me fangirling.

And Tamsin? She's just an amazing, down to earth, kick-ass heroine.

I'm really sad to see this book come to an end, but I'll be eagerly awaiting Carolyn's other books, she's won me over as a fan for life.

I give Always a Witch by Carolyn MacCullough 5 noms.

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## **? ????????? ? ?????? says**

I was a little hesitant going into this book because all I remember saying to myself the first time I read it, was that it wasn't as good. After reading, I've decided that it was pretty good. I still think that Ms. MacCullough could've just written a longer and single book instead of two.

Since the ending of the last book, Tam and Gabriel realize that they have to time travel and find the Knights, the family that is trying to ruin their own. Tamsin is still thinking about the prophecy that her grandmother has told her about; that she will have to make a very important choice. Tam, while going after the Knights in the 19th century New York, is concerned about this. To spy on Alistair and the other Knights, she disguises herself as a lady's maid and works in the heart of the evil family. She has to pretend that she is Talentless, hide from La Spider, the head of the family, and to ignore Liam's dangerous advances on her.

Toward the end, Tam realizes her horrific choice and protects herself against the Knight's with a lot of Talent.

There were many things about this book that I liked. One was the action. Tam was always hiding or using different personalities to stay in the house with her fake name of Agatha.

Tam was also a strong leading women. Instead of whining, giving up, and loving other men, she is

determined and very level headed. The ending of the book definitely continued to how her character.

One of the things that I didn't like was that there wasn't more development of the characters. The reader just went on the what they learned about her peculiar family and Gabriel. I would've liked to see more of Gabriel or more love between Tam and him. Gabriel was one of my favorite characters so that would have been good.

Another weakness that I saw was how adjusted Tam seem to being in the 1880's New York. She blended right in and talked the same as everyone else. This wasn't that believable.

The ending was not what I expected and I was a little disappointed. I felt bad for Tam but I sort of did like the outcome.

Overall, Ms. MacCullough did write a very good historical fiction novel as the second installment of this series.

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### **julieta says**

Wow. I didn't give Tamsin the credit she deserved at all. She totally won my heart. She's a real hero. At the beginning, I totally thought she was gonna be a stupid character but really the only stupid thing she did was lying to Alistair about who she was. Otherwise, she completely proved herself wrong. She sacrificed her Talent-- the thing she had longed for for so long--; to save her family, the people she loved. She didn't even hesitate to do whatever that needed to be done.

*"But what am I now?"*

*"I'm not a witch. And I'm not an ordinary person? Am I?"*

I didn't enjoy-- that's not the word, more like didn't get caught by-- this book as much as the first. I wish there were more books and at the same time, I'm glad it ended this way. The ending felt so complete like it didn't need anything else. (Although, seeing Rowena's wedding wouldn't have been bad.) I ended up liking it a lot more than I thought I would. I would totally recommend it.

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### **Kelly says**

Alone among her relatives, Tamsin Greene grew up believing the family's Talents had skipped her over, and learned to get by without magic. But in *Once a Witch*, Tamsin learned that she was far from powerless. Rather, she was one of the strongest of the Greene witches. *Always a Witch* concludes her story.

Tamsin is still getting used to having magic, and her sister Rowena is annoying her with her bridezilla antics. These concerns take a backseat when the family learns that the sinister Alistair Knight has altered the past and restored his ancestors to power. Tamsin travels back to the Victorian era to set things right, excluding her boyfriend Gabriel from her plans because she believes he'll die if he comes along. Once there, Tamsin is hired by the decadent, sadistic Knights as a lady's maid, a position that gives her an inside view of their schemes but also puts her in great danger.

The time-travel element here is stronger, in two senses of the word, than in the previous book. There's more of it (Tamsin spends the vast majority of the book in 1887), and it works better. And the Knight house, though populated by creepy people, is a fun setting filled with secret passages — and maybe a few new allies

as well.

Tamsin works out what needs to be done to stop the Knights once and for all. She learns the nature of the terrible choice that was prophesied in *Once a Witch*. This did lead to a slight "how did that happen?" moment, since according to the spell's logic, I think it should have affected (view spoiler). Yet the scene is an effective dramatic moment, heroic and bittersweet. Afterward, we learn the real reason the family kept Tamsin's Talents a secret.

Though I was occasionally confused by the way some of the magic worked, I would gladly recommend *Once a Witch* and *Always a Witch* to young adult readers. This is an enchanting, quick-moving, spooky duology with a likable heroine.

Originally written for [FantasyLiterature.com](http://FantasyLiterature.com)

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## Sandy says

More like 3.5...better than the first with a thriller of an ending.

Fans of Carolyn MacCullough's *Once a Witch* will absolutely devour this sequel, *Always a Witch*. MacCullough has upped the action and the plot, and the second half of this novel is utterly gripping. It's one of those sequels that's better than the first with an absolute thriller of an ending.

In *Always a Witch*, Tamsin must travel back to the 1880s to stop Alistair and the Knights from destroying her family. Readers who love time travel stories will enjoy Tamsin's adventures in nineteenth century New York. I personally would have no idea how to be a Victorian-era lady's maid--how do you do those complicated up-do's?? no clue--so it would have been nice to see Tamsin struggle with acclimating to the past, not to mention things were a little too coincidental at times. But Tamsin? She's the strong, loyal, independent heroine we met in *Once a Witch*, but now she's on a dangerous quest to save her family...will she be willing to make a devastating choice and face the consequences?

Paranormal romance fans who like their books with more PARANORMAL and less ROMANCE will enjoy this series. Gabriel is present and supportive in both books, but his romance with Tamsin definitely takes a back seat. I personally wish there could have been a few more swoony moments, but those wishing for more kicking and less kissing will like the de-emphasis of the romance.

Two things really set this series apart for me: that zany family and the uniqueness of the "talents". Tamsin's loving family is always entertaining, and some of the best scenes of this series include moments with her wacky family. Such a present, supportive family is refreshing for YA literature. The concept of a "talent" opens the way for such creativity and surprise in the story, and I loved seeing everyone's talents and how they affect the conclusion.

And that ending? So did not see it coming. It made me want to use one of Tamsin's Grandma's "Ah"s once everything was revealed. All of a sudden, it all made sense...the predictions, the secrets, the choices. The real driving force of this sequel is the sequence of events barreling towards that harrowing conclusion, and WOW the conclusion delivered. What a thrilling end to this series! (At least, I think it's the end? We'll see!)

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## Wendy Darling says

What started out as a cute book became a really good one in the end. Full review to come.

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## ~Tina~ says

*It took the return of an old family enemy, two episodes of time travel, and one very dangerous love spell that nearly killed my sister before I learned three things.*

*First, I can stop anyone from using their Talents to harm me. Second, I can absorb a person's Talent if they attempt to use it against me three times. Third, I apparently have a choice ahead of me.*

Since this book isn't released till Aug 2011, I don't want to say too much since I want others to just read this book.

**Always a Witch** is such a quaint, engaging and genuine story filled with so much spirit, magic and heart. I love these stories and its characters. It's just a really fun book. I loved going back in time with Tam and Gabriel and meeting new villains along the way. I love that Tam doesn't always have the answers, but it doesn't stop her from trying. What she did for her family was amazing, such an incredible character and I simply adore Gabriel!

Bottom line, Great adventure, lots of twists I didn't see coming and lovable character that will keep you entertained from minute one.

I adore this book to pieces and I can't wait to get a copy to treasure always!

I'm pretty sure this is the ending to this series which makes me sad, but I can't wait to see what MacCullough comes up with next. Her books will always have a special place on my shelf;) )

Thanks to Netgalley and Houghton Mifflin Harcourt for giving me the opportunity to view an early copy!

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## Andrea at Reading Lark says

Review Posted on Reading Lark 6/24/11: <http://readinglark.blogspot.com/2011/...>

I read *Once a Witch* awhile back after it was first released and remembered really enjoying it, but this one blew it out of the water. It may be cheesy to say that this book put a spell on me, but that is exactly what it did. I was unable to put this book down for long. Every time I closed it to do something other than read, my Kindle kept whispering my name urging me to pick it back up and dive into the story. This edition in the series is so fast paced that there are hardly any lulls in the action. My heart was pounding as I read chapter after chapter.

Tasmin and Gabriel are back for more adventures of the witchy variety. In the first book, they have to travel back in time to find a family heirloom that left in the wrong hands can spell disaster for the Greene clan. In this follow up novel, Tasmin and Gabriel will once again have to use their Talents to track down Alistair Knight as he seeks to protect his family from losing their magic. Will Tasmin and Gabriel be able to stop him a second time OR will Alistair prevail and destroy the Greenses once and for all?

I love Carolyn MacCullough's take on magic and witches. Each of her characters has a special talent that they can wield for both good and evil purposes. Some have the power to heal, others have the power to

manipulate the weather, and some can even steal the bodies of others to use for their own purposes. Tasmin is more special than all the rest - she has the power to resist Talents and if someone uses a Talent against her three times then she takes on their powers. Just like they say in Spiderman - with great power comes great responsibility. Tasmin must use her unique Talents to save her family before the Knight family erases them for all time.

Fans of witch novels and historical fiction are sure to be delighted by this tale. The writing is solid and the characters come to life as the story unfolds. I have to admit that I have quite the crush on Gabriel at this point. He sacrifices everything to make sure that Tasmin is safe. That is pretty swoon worthy if ya ask me. I also enjoyed getting a break from the whole love triangle plot strand that seems to be dominating YA books these days.

One Last Gripe: I didn't like that the ending left me feeling hollow. I am just not happy with how things were left for Tasmin. I just didn't get a strong sense of closure with this one.

My Favorite Thing About This Book: The fast paced action that begins as soon as Tasmin goes back to the 1800's - the momentum rolled through the novel and kept me enthralled

First Sentence: I was born on the night of Samhain.

Favorite Character: Gabriel

Least Favorite Character: Liam

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## **Patty says**

Loved this even more than the first book in this series...my question is...will there be a book three? I am not quite ready to say good bye to Tamsin and Gabriel.

Always A Witch

By

Carolyn MacCullough

From The Book...

Since the gripping conclusion of *Once A Witch*, Tamsin Greene has been haunted by her grandmother's prophecy that she will soon be forced to make a crucial decision---one so terrible that it could harm everyone she loves. When she discovers that her enemy, Alistair Knight, went back in time to Victorian Era New York in order to destroy her family, Tamsin is forced to follow him into the past. Stranded all alone in the nineteenth century, Tamsin soon finds herself disguised as a lady's maid in the terrifying mansion of the evil Knight family, avoiding the watchful eye of the vicious matron, La Spider, and fending off the advances of Liam Knight. As time runs out, both families square off in a thrilling display of magic. And to her horror, Tamsin finally understands the nature of her fateful choice.

My thoughts...

This book was fabulous. The author managed to write a sequel that I thought was even better than the first book. The danger and mystery and fear were accented by Tamsin's offbeat 16 year old mannerisms and sarcasm. Tamsin loves second hand clothes and her BFF Agatha and lattes and fun...her hair is pretty much always a mess...she is irreverent to say the least and has a typical 16 year old disregard for any and all authority.

So she finds herself in practically medieval times (for her) trying to secure pins in the hair of the daughter of her family's evil enemy. She knows she is the only one who can fix all of the awful things that the Knight family has done to innocent people and to the Greene family. And because of her grandmother's warning...she knows that she may not come out of this unscathed.

So...it was a breathtaking reading experience for me...nail biting even. I literally finished it overnight. I cheered Tamsin. She is a fun and an amazing heroine...

Now...I yearn for book three.

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## oliviasbooks says

I confidently predict that readers who loved *Once a Witch* will also love the second half of the story about the seemingly talentfree, teenaged witch Tamsin Greene, her wacky, magic family, her hot and talented boyfriend Gabriel and their joint fight against the super evil and humans-hating Knight clan, because it is basically composed using the same elements:

- an imperfect and insecure but likable, courageous and strong teenaged heroine.
- a cute and devoted love interest and side-kick.
- a slightly nutty family of bickering but well-meaning witches who provide both surprise elements and entertainment.
- physically dangerous time travel.
- action and a little thrill.
- thoroughly evil black witches lacking a conscience and compassion but filling the gaps with cool calculation, greed and gruesome practices like human sacrifice.
- decent writing.

For me personally, „Always a Witch“ dropped half a star from the 3.5 stars I doled out to *Once a Witch* (out of a total of 5), maybe mainly because the sequel is exactly that: The second part of the story, one which did not add new elements, take the romance to a further level, or make the heroine's otherness stand out – apart from her developing quite angelic traits in the end. All in all, a sequel that is almost as good as its predecessor is an unexpectedly positive thing, for the nature of paranormal sequels seems to have this natural gravitation thing, that drags them down, built in. Still, I nonetheless irrationally hoped for

- Tamsin to have more difficulties to adapt to her life in the past (the struggle of nowadays' people with the customs and the mechanisms of everyday life in past centuries is what makes time travel stories so attractive to me. But Tamsin takes over the life and the tasks of a lady's maid within a day and without blinking an eye or getting scolded for being clueless.)
- Tamsin's and Gabriel's shared time not to be wholly consumed by witchy business matters (i.e. saving the Greene family) instead of occasionally letting some hot sparks fly. (I really expected Tamsin, who *is* different from her family, not to be so hesitant and/or old-couplish. Apart from one misunderstanding (view spoiler), all of the young couple's actions consist of heroically saving each other, planning together, trying to exclude each other from overly dangerous acts. „Always a Witch“ is a paranormal targeted at girls. And in the end I could not even remember what Gabriel looks like.)
- the villains (members of the Knight family) to be less than 100% evil. (Yes, there are some specimen that turned out to belong to the good side, but those who didn't, were painted a shiny black without any hints of gray.)
- Tamsin's heroics to be a little more real and believable. (Sure, Tamsin did the right thing and it is consistent to show her being courageous, but I expected her to be more afraid, more desperate to find an alternative solution in the end and to be a little more spunky and unconventional altogether.)

I really did enjoy reading „Always a Witch“, but I have to summarise that I am a little disappointed and that I did not feel compelled to write a review in order to persuade all my friends not to miss this book. On the contrary: I shoved writing the review from day to day, getting a worse and worse conscience, because I had been kindly provided with the opportunity to read the book before it was published by NetGalley and Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, the publisher.

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### **Lauren says**

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Her Grandmother knew that Tamsin would have to sacrifice her own talent; stopping others from using their talent on her, so she wanted her to learn to live without having one.

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