



***The Witch Boy* (The Witch Boy Trilogy #1) by Molly Knox Ostertag**

Graphix, an imprint of Scholastic Inc., 2017

ISBN: 9781338089516 (Trade Paperback)

*Age Range: 8 to 12 (Suggested by Publisher)

Grade Range: 4-7 (Recommended by *School Library Journal*)

BOOK SYNOPSIS

From the illustrator of the web comic *Strong Female Protagonist* comes a debut middle-grade graphic novel about family, identity, courage -- and magic.

In thirteen-year-old Aster's family, all the girls are raised to be witches, while boys grow up to be shapeshifters. Anyone who dares cross those lines is exiled. Unfortunately for Aster, he still hasn't shifted . . . and he's still fascinated by witchery, no matter how forbidden it might be.

When a mysterious danger threatens the other boys, Aster knows he can help -- as a witch. It will take the encouragement of a new friend, the non-magical and non-conforming Charlie, to convince Aster to try practicing his skills. And it will require even more courage to save his family . . . and be truly himself.

REVIEWS AND PRAISE

★ "Flawless" —*Kirkus Reviews*, **starred review**

★ "An excellent choice for reluctant readers, fans of fantasy, and those looking for books that explore gender roles." —*School Library Journal*, **starred review**

"Aster's journey of self-discovery, particularly as he learns to take a stand against assumed gender roles, will resonate with many young readers working to assert themselves within their own communities." —*Booklist*

"Ostertag is in full control of plotting, dialogue, and visual techniques to advance the story with her sturdy panel artwork, and her family-centered narrative is warm and wholesome." —*Publishers Weekly*

"This graphic novel's clear panel outlines, subdued hues, and balanced paneled layouts allow the story and page-turns to progress at a steady pace...Close-up perspectives reveal characters' facial expressions and feelings not explicitly stated in the dialogue." —*The Horn Book*

"A good read for middle level readers who enjoy fantasy graphic novels with a male hero who is identifiable to a wide audience." —*School Library Connection*

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“A gorgeous and intriguing look at the complexity of gender norms and being true to yourself.”—*Syfy.com*

“A perfect and empowering story” —*Nerdophiles*

“This book is especially timely, as it does a lot to combat patriarchal assumptions of what manhood should be...”
—*Autostraddle*

“Ostertag brews a fun and compelling analogy for the grating conformity kids feel as they segue into adults.”
—*Paste*

“An important message about acceptance wrapped in a fantasy” —*Comicsverse*

“A heroic tale that proves magic has no gender” —*Pride.com*

“This emotional, magical story will grab young readers’ attention while helping teach them the importance of acceptance and love, both more powerful than any spell.” —*CNN*

“A brilliantly executed combination of creative fantasy and nuanced coming-of-age fare, *The Witch Boy* is a must-read tale” —*Discovery*

AWARDS AND ACCOLADES

- ALSC Graphic Novels Reading List
- Bank Street College of Education Best Books of the Year
- Children's and Young Adult Bloggers Literacy Awards (The Cybils) - Winner
- Delaware Blue Hen Boko Award Masterlist
- EBSCO SEE-IT Award (WINNER)
- Excellence in Graphic Literature Awards--Best Middle Grade Finalist
- Great Graphic Novels
- Hawaii NĒnĒ Children’s Book Award Masterlist
- Hong Kong Battle of the Books
- Maryland Black-Eyed Susan Book Award (Winner)
- New Hampshire Cochero Readers' Award Masterlist
- TLA Little Maverick Graphic Novel Reading List
- TLA Maverick Graphic Novel Reading List
- A 2018 PRISM AWARD nominee
- Bookish.com Fall 2017 Best Children’s Books
- *Kirkus Reviews* “Best Books of 2017”
- A Publishers Weekly Fall 2017 Flying Start

MEDIA AND RESOURCES

- [Read with Pride Resource Guide](#)
- [Geeks Out](#), author interview
- [Comics Beat](#), author interview
- [The New York Times](#), “Twelve Books for Feminist Boys and Girls”

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- [Mr. Schu Reads](#), author interview

RESPONSE TO CHALLENGES

[Harris County Robert W. Hainsworth Law Library](#): *The Witch Boy* is a coming-of-age graphic novel about “a young boy, Aster, who is intent on becoming a witch in a community where boys are expected to become shapeshifters and anyone who crosses those lines is exiled.” This book was challenged because of its LGBTQIA+ subject matter.

*A NOTE ON AGE RANGES

A publisher-suggested age range covers the gamut of readers that publishers envision using the book, whether for independent reading, family sharing, group study, or in other ways. Educators have the best sense of the appropriate age range for the diverse learners they work with and understand these ranges vary depending on a book’s intended use.

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