

Sinful life leads to New Jersey

The 'is a faerie tale of a teenager and her mother being forced to move back home, where life will magically become chaotic

Jess Sheppard

Arts & Culture Editor

How does a modern faerie tale begin?

Author Holly Black's novel "Tithe" begins with 16-year-old Kaye Fierch – master shoplifter, deliverer of Chinese food and baby-sitter to her rock 'n' roll mother.

It's not normal, but she likes it fine, traveling with her mother's band, smoking, drinking and seeing weird things out of the corner of her eye. Then she and her mother are forced to move back to their home town in New Jersey, where darkness and destiny are waiting.

Kaye has been able to see faeries since she was little. So, when she comes upon a dying knight in black armor while walking at night in the rain, she recognizes him as a court fey, a being bound in service to one of the faerie kingdoms. In return for her aid, the knight, Roiben, promises to answer three questions for her.

Before long, Kaye's questions lead her, Roiben and her childhood acquaintance Cornelius into the dangerous power games that are fought between the two major faerie courts. In no time at all Kaye and Corny are matching wits with a murderous kelpie in exchange for magic lessons, sneaking into the feasts at the dark faeries' court and coming to terms with the unspeakable attraction they are developing for the realm of the fey.

The gritty backdrop of the book coupled with Kaye's unique view of the world make "Tithe" both a fast and fascinating read. Black's descriptions are almost poetic in their elegant simplicity and the references to modern culture are well blended with the flawless dialogue.

Black's tale is rife with all the problems a 16-year-old girl should have – peer-pressure, what boys to pursue and how to sneak out at night – as well as the abnormal challenges of realizing that she's really a pixie who's been cleverly disguised as a human.

And rather than going through the cliché crisis of identity that is already overused, Kaye is excited to learn what she really is after the shock of the discovery wears off. Then the obvious question arises – who put such a strong disguise on Kaye in the first place? And more importantly, why?

But the truth always has a price, and for Kaye, Roiben and Corny the price is heavy and steeped in the blood of their loved ones.



I won't need anyone's help.
I can do it on my own.

with that degree, it's gonna give me more opportunity so I can make more money.
I'm already working with human resources—how to deal with people, codes of conduct, loyalty, ethics, the hiring process, paperwork... A job is just a job. A career is something that you worked for. I feel better as a person now. I feel more accomplished.

Michelle

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