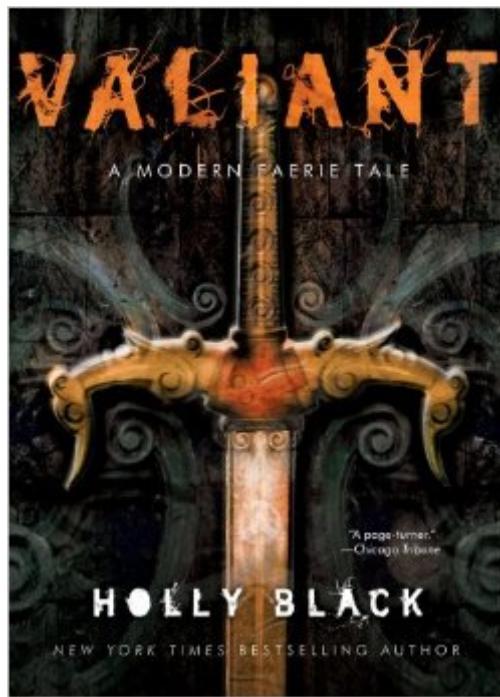


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Valiant: A Modern Faerie Tale



Synopsis

When seventeen-year-old Valerie runs away to New York City, she's trying to escape a life that has utterly betrayed her. Sporting a new identity, she takes up with a gang of squatters who live in the city's labyrinthine subway system. But there's something eerily beguiling about Val's new friends. And when one talks Val into tracking down the lair of a mysterious creature with whom they are all involved, Val finds herself torn between her newfound affection for an honorable monster and her fear of what her new friends are becoming.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

While I enjoyed the Spiderwick books, I was dying for Holly Black to return to writing for teens as she did in TITHE. I'm not a faery fan, but I loved what she did with TITHE, and I wanted to see if she would create more edgy, dark faery characters and settings. She is still Queen of the Shocker Opening: Val catches her boyfriend making it with her mom. Val's flight to New York after this results in her meeting with street teens who live in the tunnels under Grand Central. With them she comes to see the faerie world, not the Disney sugar-coated one, but the perilous one where humans can be used up and spat out, where the inhabitants are beautiful and deadly. Her new friends introduce her to Ravus, the troll pharmacist who brews potions, including the drug Never. It makes it possible for the faery people to live in our world without slow poisoning from exposure to iron, but it makes humans feel, and act, like the faeries. They can even do magic. But there are problems. Never is addictive. Val, who earns Ravus's trust as they talk and she serves as a runner for his

drugs to his faerie customers, becomes addicted and steals from him. And his customers are getting murdered. Ravus, with whom Val is falling in love, is the prime suspect, and the faerie court that exiled him and his customers to our world is coming to deal with the murders and with him. This is a powerful book. It's about betrayal, homelessness, addiction and its poisonous effects on relationships and lifestyles, love, appearances, and hate. It's about making decisions and living with them. It's about choices. It's pure Holly Black, dark and wonderful and beautiful. No, it's not TITHE, and that's good. If I want to read TITHE, I have it on my shelf.

Once upon a time, though not so long ago, there lived a teenager named Valerie. Valerie lived with her mother in a single parent family relationship, played lacrosse in school, and was best friends with a girl who preferred girls as friends. Valerie had a foul mouth and a temper to match, and had a wonderful opportunity to demonstrate both of these when she caught her boyfriend cheating on her. Being in possession of tickets to a hockey game at Madison Square Garden, Valerie fled to New York, where a chance meeting introduced her to a part of the New York Underground that usually only exists in the mind of Neil Gaiman and his ilk. Joining her new friends Lolli (as in pop) and Dave (just Dave), she officially became a runaway, living deep in the subway system and scavenging for her daily bread (and whatever else) on the streets (and in the alleyways and garbage cans) of Manhattan. She also met Luis, the leader of the little group, a strange young man with multiple body piercings and a both a weight and a chip on his shoulder. Very soon, Valerie realized that there was more going on than communal living and scavenging, and here begins the grim faerie tale part of this story. As Holly Black tells it, there are faerie folk living among us, members of the Seelie Court, who appear to us as regular people (regular for Manhattanites at least) by magical means. Her friends have been working for a troll who lives under a bridge, and they have been trip trapping to and from his lair running errands in exchange for certain favors.

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