



The Witch's Market

Mingmei Yip

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From the author of *Secret of a Thousand Beauties* and *Peach Blossom Pavilion* comes a beautifully written novel of self-discovery and intrigue.

Chinese-American assistant professor Eileen Chen specializes in folk religion at her San Francisco college. Though her grandmother made her living as a shamaness, Eileen publicly dismisses witchcraft as mere superstition. Yet privately, the subject intrigues her.

When a research project takes her to the Canary Islands—long rumored to be home to real witches—Eileen is struck by the lush beauty of Tenerife and its blend of Spanish and Moroccan culture. A stranger invites her to a local market where women sell amulets, charms, and love spells. Gradually Eileen immerses herself in her exotic surroundings, finding romance with a handsome young furniture maker. But as she learns more about the lives of these self-proclaimed witches, Eileen must choose how much trust to place in this new and seductive world, where love, greed, and vengeance can be as powerful, or as destructive, as any magic.

The Witch's Market Details

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From Reader Review The Witch's Market for online ebook

Gaele says

Straddling the divide between two cultures, Eileen Chen's specialty is Folk Religions. Eileen is most certainly a Chinese American woman, dismissing the beliefs of her grandmother, a shamaness as superstitious nonsense. But her dissection of the foundations of each belief she encounters, and her rather observational approach to the life around her left her a character that stayed at arm's length throughout the story.

That remove, however, did not diminish my overall interest in the stories and tales, the superstitions and their origins, and the beauty with which Yip detailed the scenery, and her ability to present a belief in many ways. Eileen's need to find the 'cause', the 'bone-deep' belief held by those she studies, and those things that just seemingly have no real explanation.

With Eileen's research trip to the Canary Islands for a research project, she leaves behind the familiar, and begins to engage in that new world, her own beliefs are questioned as she starts to see that not everything has an answer.

I would have liked to see more of Eileen's growth and some of the self-doubt that must have assaulted her with all of the newness she is discovering, and her own new-found determination to become a witch herself. The remove that we feel from Eileen does have a sense of "Alice down the rabbit hole" to it – perhaps the author hoped to bring that untethered to reality sense to her in the journey- something to decide for yourself. Overall, this was an intriguing, if slow-paced story that kept me interested in trying to discover just where Eileen would go next.

I received an eArc copy of the title from the publisher via NetGalley for purpose of honest review. I was not compensated for this review: all conclusions are my own responsibility.

Review first appeared at I am, Indeed

Heather says

I loved the synopsis of this book. A religion professor finding out that she is a shamaness in the Chinese tradition and then meeting up with witches from another tradition? Yes, please.

It starts out delightfully creepy. She is starting to have visions of the spirit world. She meets a coven of witches who bring her into a ritual and abandon her naked the next day and she doesn't remember what happened. A horse takes her for a ride to meet a mysterious sculptor.

But then it turns into a murder mystery. Yeah, didn't see that coming.

I lost a lot of interest at this point. The weirdness was gone. She still talks to ghosts but they just want her solve the mystery. Also, suddenly every man is falling in love with her and wants to marry her the moment

they meet her. This isn't even based on romance or attraction or anything. They just suggest getting married.

I wish there had been a better sense of place. She went to a culture that is unfamiliar to her but she is conveniently fluent in Spanish so she has no communication difficulties. She doesn't really explore the islands. She holes up in a castle and in an abandoned village that could have been set anywhere. I never read anything that I felt could only have happened in this setting.

Her exploration of her Chinese spiritual heritage was much better but I wish there had been more exploration of the witches she came to find. This review was originally posted on Based On A True Story

Elsbeth says

Simply dreadful and horribly disappointing!

Eleanor Horvitz says

this book starts off fast in the beginning and gets bogged down in the middle. I liked reading about the Chinese mythology and beliefs. I don't feel that I got to really know the main character's personality but enjoy the characters of Luis, grandpa, and LaoLao. The ending solves the mysteries in the book and leaves some relationships involving the main character open ended. I give it 3 and a half stars

Jumi Ramirez says

Muy buenos

Marchel says

Buku ke 13 di tahun 2017

Covernya bagus.

Walau pun tentang penyihir, tapi porsi sihirnya sedikit sekali lebih banyak misterinya.

POV orang pertama, dan pace lambat.

Oh, banyak adegan khusus dewasa jadi tidak layak dibaca remaja dan anak-anak.

Debbie says

Mingmei Yip's inventive page-turner captivated me from page one. Using her unique storytelling voice she mixes Chinese myths, legends and beliefs with an evocative present day literary tale that includes a cryptic mystery. This she delivers through her prose like narrative that's spot on for depicting her exotic locales and

her imaginative, off the wall characters including her enigmatic, fanciful and realistic heroine, Eileen. Her innovative blending of cultures, the lessons in Chinese witchcraft and the dreamlike, Alice down the rabbit hole feel makes this adult fairytale the perfect choice for any fan of Magical-Realism.

On her 33rd birthday Eileen Chen decided to become a witch. She hailed from a long line of witches as her mother, grandmother and great-grandmother practiced the art. She knew the basics of witchcraft taught to her by those women but instead of practicing Eileen decided to become a scholar of Shamanism, got her Ph.D. and took an assistant professorship at San Francisco State University. Her boss had been urging her to publish a book on Shamanism and western witches, which just might get her a tenured position. So deciding to combine both goals the choice of where to go to find out all about witchcraft conveniently came to her in a dream, which led her to the mystical and mysterious Canary Islands.

With the blessings of her boss and her younger sister, plus a begrudged blessing from her sometimes boyfriend Eileen took off for an epic, hopefully life changing adventure.

What happens when she gets there is the stuff of fairytales.

Ainslee says

When I first saw this book, I fell in love with the cover, the title, and the short summary. I almost cried when I read “The Witch’s Market” not because it was exceptional and really moving, but because all of my expectations went crashing down around me. In fact, I was so disappointed with this book that I stopped forcing myself to read it at around page 100 something. I just couldn’t. Honestly, the story could’ve been better. It had potential, but the dialogues are so dull it was like watching an ill-prepared play with nervous stage actors; it made me cringe. I also felt like the author didn’t do much research for the book especially on the subject of witchcraft and witches especially since I studied a bit of Wicca and found most of her description a little offensive (and that’s from someone who doesn’t even practice witchcraft). However I did enjoy the glimpses of Chinese culture, folk stories, and stories about Eileen’s grandmother, but that’s just about it.

I just really wished the author improved on the plot and kept re-writing the book until it was, at the very least, good enough because like I said, it did have potential, but it just fell short. What I read wasn’t good enough. The book seemed jejune, to be honest. Also, I don’t get the title. If the place is called the Witches’ Market, then why was the title the Witch’s Market? I would really appreciate clarification on this.

Polly Krize says

I received an ARC of this book in exchange for an honest review.

Eileen, trained as a shaman, is drawn to the Canary Islands to investigate Chinese witchcraft and its Western counterparts. Sounds like it has potential, right? Sadly, I was disappointed, partly by the uninspired writing, but also by obvious errors that indicate bad (or no) research.

Christine Nicole says

Decent plot but retched characters.

Nani says

I am so disappointed in this book! I fell in love with Mingmei Yip in a Secret of Thousand Beauties and bought The Witch's Market. But alas! It was so boring that it took so long to complete it! Nevertheless I pray that my next Mjngmei Yip book is better!!

CL says

This book is not your typical murder mystery but for some reason I just could not put this book down once I started reading. Chinese-American Eileen Chen would like to make tenure at the college where she is an assistant professor. In order to do that they tell her if she writes a book on witches it will help her achieve this goal. She decides to take a year off and go in search of material to write her book. She leaves her rich boyfriend and family to travel alone to the Canary Islands where she meets one interesting character after another and all are willing to make her an immediate part of their life. There are the brothers she meets on the ferry to the Islands, the rich widower who lives in a Heartbreak Castle and takes her in when she is found on his land passed out, the grandson and grandfather in the deserted village she travels to and the dying cabaret singer from the widower's past. The witches she meets are not always true witches but she learns that she can trust her instincts and her grandmother was right she would always be taken care of if she treated the spirits with respect. From one interesting situation to another she soon discovers her true self. Mingmei Yip is a great story teller. Great read. I would like to thank the publisher and Net Galley for the chance to read this ARC.

Mrs Mommy Booknerd <http://mrsmommybooknerd.blogspot.com> says

I thought THE WITCH'S MARKET was an original, spellbinding tale about myths, the power of good storytelling, wondrous magic and mystery all mixed together to create a fascinating story that is hard to put down! 4 stars!

Leah Bayer says

This is a strange little book that's hard to describe. It's about a woman doing anthropology fieldwork about witches on the Canary Islands, and she has a history of witchcraft in her own family. Sounds fascinating, right? And all of those elements, the Chinese folklore and witch myths, is great. SO many tidbits and pieces of history.

But the writing style just doesn't match up with the content, which is a problem I've rarely encountered. It's written like chick-lit or a fluffy romance. Very simplistic, with a focus on mundane details and (of course)

the looks of everyone around our heroine. It's not bad writing, it's just really solidly mediocre. The premise is literary fiction, the writing is not. It's so strange!

I think most people wouldn't really enjoy this book. If you want chick-lit, the premise is way too esoteric (and the book actually turns into a murder mystery with ghosts, no joke). If you want literary fiction, it's unbearably fluffy. But I have a degree in anthropology and a lifelong obsession with mythology, so I really enjoyed all of the information presented here, both real and made-up. I don't think I would ever recommend this to anyone, but I did enjoy reading it.

Lolly K Dandeneau says

The Witch's Market has a four star rating because of the interesting folklore. There were times though, when I felt I was at arms length from the character, and there is a coldness that I couldn't cross. With that aside, the story itself reminded me of a cross between Amy Tan and Alice Hoffman (both authors I love). The magic, witchery, religious, superstitious happenings in this novel are fascinating. I have a deep love for superstitions, why people believe them, how they came about, what they are and this novel is full of them; being Chinese beliefs makes it that more engaging. Example. "Laolao had taught me that seeing a living person with ghosts means that he or she is about to die."

Eileen Chen is a professor specializing in folk religion, having taken an intellectual interest in her family 'gift' rather than fully believing in it. Her grandmother was a shamaness, while on the outside she scoffs at it almost as being a form of charlatanism, she cannot deny that her grandmother has been right before. Eileen even finds a curious pleasure in playing up her shamaness background for entertaining friends and peers. Living with her feet in the solid scholarly world she has her hungry eyes on the mysterious. When an opportunity arises for Chen to research real life witches living on the Canary Islands for a book she means to write, she leaves behind a promising future with a wealthy lover for dangerous adventure. The people that come into her life during her journey have secrets they have buried, of their own and others. On the way to her destination, she begins seeing a strange girl and wonders at her sadness. The mysterious stranger won't be her first mystery. Before long, Eileen's presence will disturb spirits living and dead, and nothing will stay buried. Encountering love, death, and restless spirits- Eileen is about to learn that not everything in the world can be understood through study.
