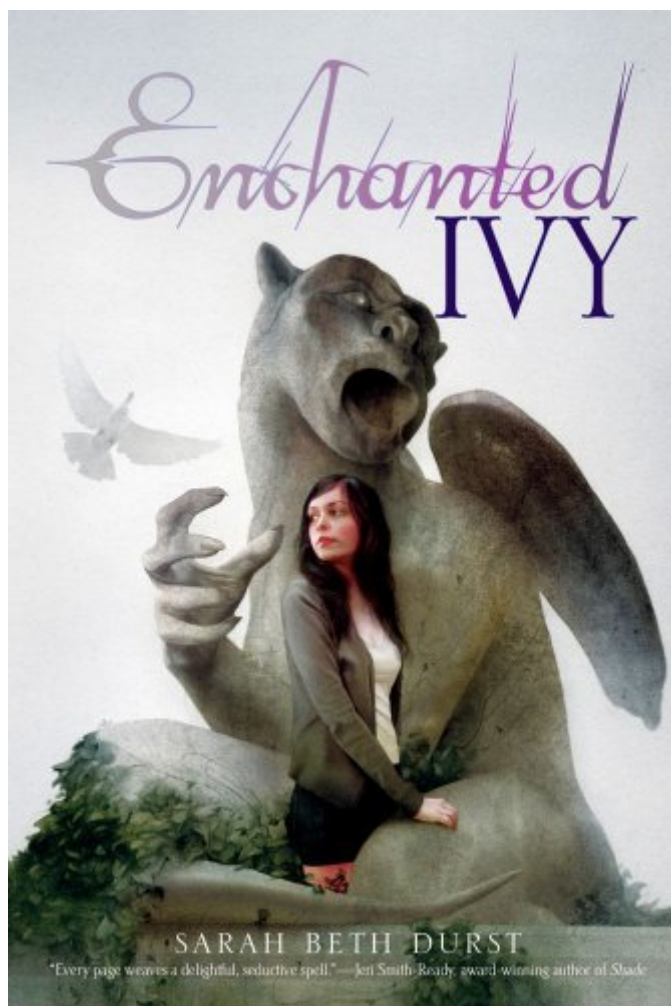


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Enchanted Ivy



Synopsis

What Lily Carter wants most in the world is to attend Princeton University just like her grandfather. When she finally visits the campus, Grandpa surprises her: She has been selected to take the top-secret Legacy Test. Passing means automatic acceptance to Princeton. Sweet! Lily's test is to find the Ivy Key. But what is she looking for? Where does she start? As she searches, Lily is joined by Tye, a cute college boy with orange and black hair who says he's her guard. That's weird. But things get seriously strange when a gargoyle talks to her. He tells her that there are two Princetons—the ordinary one and a magical one—and the Key opens the gate between them. But there are more secrets that surround Lily. Worse secrets. When Lily enters the magical Princeton, she uncovers old betrayals and new dangers, and a chance at her dream becomes a fight for her life. Soon Lily is caught in a power struggle between two worlds, with her family at its center. In a place where Knights slay monsters, boys are were-tigers, and dragons might be out for blood, Lily will need all of her ingenuity and courage—and a little magic—to unite the worlds and unlock the secrets of her past and her future.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This book is rather light in character development. I read another book by Sarah Beth Durst called the "The Lost" which is I think is a very good book and it has sequels. She is a very good writer judging by "The Lost." I like that Enchanted Ivy is set at Princeton, - it seems designed to promote going away to college as an adventure in the minds of her audience. I enjoyed the descriptions of buildings and architectural decorations on the buildings such as the magic stone apes and gargoyles. I like urban magic fantasy such as this where there are other more magical worlds just a gate away. Andre Norton, Charles de Lint are very good at this type of magical worlds/urban fantasy genre of writing. I could see where Sarah could take this book and rewrite it for grownups with a little more depth in plot and character development. As it is a simple and has good visual descriptions- it might make a good made-for-TV movie.

The Cover: I'm not blown away by this cover or anything. I understand the meaning of the gargoyle and (I'm guessing) dragon. But I think there could have been some more improvements, something to make it more eye catching. But like I said, I don't hate it. I like the idea of the fogged background, which sets the atmosphere of the magical aspects of the book.
The Characters: Durst's protagonist, Lily, is refreshingly independent. She even tries to be badass, even though she hasn't quite got the hang of it. There's a life to Lily which allows me to empathize with her. She has the responsibility of watching over her mom, who's a few fries short of a happy meal, keeping up her grades so she can get into college (meaning Princeton), and pleasing her grandfather, by trying to get into said college. Tye and Jake, the two boys vying for Lily's attention, have both captured a tiny piece of my heart. (Tye all the way!) Tye has shown traits that I was surprised by. Meaning, he has no trouble falling in love. He's funny, rebelling, and generally complex. He lives in the magical Princeton, where his dad rules on the Council. And why he seems to be fearless, up close you can tell he has a few fissures. Jake makes me a little weary. In the story he's described as a puppy. Eager to please. It seems all he wants is to be a part of the Vineyard Club, and nothing else. He even goes as far as dumping Lily to the ground after she's been injured, just because he fears she's something unliked by the club. In my perspective, I think he needs to mature a little--and hopefully we'll get to see this happen in a sequel.
The plot: A magical Princeton, full of talking gargoyles, were-tigers, knights, unicorns, dragons, and so much more. It makes me want to apply to Princeton! It takes a good imagination to come up with a story that won't be sucked into the masses, and Durst has showed us

that she has that. We follow Lily as she stays at Princeton with her grandfather and mother, trying to complete a test given her by the Vineyard Club. The task she's given: find the Ivy Key. And if she succeeds: guaranteed acceptance into Princeton. Wow. What a deal. The story is fast paced as Lily immediately starts her journey, where she is joined by the "outlawed" Tye, the were-tiger. Of course, were-tigers don't exist! And the talking gargoyles--it's all wires and mechanisms. At least, this is what Lily tells herself as she's put through events that get stranger by the minute. Thebookheist.com

I enjoyed this contemporary fantasy. I thought Lily was a realistic teen. She was excited to be visiting Princeton with her grandfather and her mother. She was bright and intended to go to Princeton like her grandfather had. She was also used to protecting her mother who has memory issues and who was prone to doing odd things. She had learned to always keep a calm front no matter what new strange thing her mother did. She was very protective of her mother. When she arrived at Princeton, she was surprised to learn that her grandfather had set her up for the Legacy test. Passing it meant automatic admission to Princeton. But taking the test really opened her up to new experiences like getting advice from the stone gargoyles who decorate the buildings at Princeton. Since they are visiting at a reunion weekend, she sees lots of orange and black. In fact, a young man named Tye who presents himself as her guard during the quest has orange and black hair. She quickly learns that her grandfather is one of the Knights who protect humans because Princeton has a gate to another world - a world with were-tigers, gargoyles, unicorns, dryads and elves. But it takes a key to travel between the worlds. Lily's test is to find a key. During her quest, Lily learns lots of secrets about Princeton, her family and herself. She finds herself in great danger and in the middle of a possible war. This story had adventure, danger and romance. I recommend it to fantasy-loving young adults.

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