



## Witch Child

By Celia Rees

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Welcome to the world of young Mary Newbury, a world where simply being different can cost a person her life. Hidden until now in the pages of her diary, Mary's startling story begins in 1659, the year her beloved grandmother is hanged in the public square as a witch. Mary narrowly escapes a similar fate, only to face intolerance and new danger among the Puritans in the New World. How long can she hide her true identity? Will she ever find a place where her healing powers will not be feared?

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## Witch Child By Celia Rees Bibliography

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## Editorial Review

### Amazon.com Review

During the witch hunts of the mid-1600s, many young Englishwomen died on the gallows, innocent victims of false or hysterical accusations of witchcraft. But what of those women who actually claimed the name "witch" as their own? In the pages of her secret journal, Mary Nuttall reveals what it is like to live in a climate of mistrust and piety in which differences are dangerous and rumors can kill, where she must hide her heritage as a healer and pagan. With a sure hand, she describes her beloved grandmother's trial and hanging as a witch, her own rescue by a mysterious noblewoman, and her eventual passage to the New World and the forest settlement of Beulah. There Mary falls under a curtain of suspicion when she willingly chooses to explore the dark woods shunned by the fearful colonists and makes friends with some of the spiritual native people. When several girls in the community begin to shriek and swoon, and the same minister who damned Mary's grandmother comes to search for signs of witchcraft, Mary is subjected to close and deadly scrutiny.

Breaking with most historical fiction about witchcraft (such as Elizabeth Speare's *The Witch of Blackbird Pond*), British author Celia Rees raises the stakes and the tension by placing a real witch at the center of her story. *Witch Child* is an engrossing, suspenseful novel that will cast a spell over both readers of historical fiction and fans of witchcraft series from Circle of Three to Sweep. --Jennifer Hubert

### From Publishers Weekly

Though much of Rees's debut novel moves at a lackadaisical pace, its opening scenes are riveting: Mary, 14, watches as her grandmother the only family she has ever known is tortured, tried and finally hung as a witch. Afterward, a mysterious protector sends Mary away from England with a group of Puritans bound for a remote Massachusetts settlement an odd haven indeed for a girl reputed to be a witch. The book unfolds through Mary's diary entries. She tries to be "the perfect little Puritan maid" during the voyage and, upon reaching America, travels with her fellow passengers to a new settlement. But there Mary is drawn to the forest and a Native American boy, Jaybird (grandson of an elder who is, of course, a wise healer), raising the suspicions of her neighbors. Crisis looms when Mary becomes the scapegoat of a witch trial centering on the hysterical behavior of a gaggle of privileged Puritan girls (shades of *The Crucible*). Though the story is filled with authentic-seeming historic detail, Mary behaves more like a 21st-century teenager with a penchant for things New Age than a product of her own era: she is, for example, one of the only settlers enlightened enough to appreciate the local Native Americans ("The Indians go lightly in the world, that is all"). An afterword provides links to a Web site, as well as a request for "information regarding any of the individuals and families mentioned." A sequel is forthcoming. Hampered by wandering story lines and some stereotyped supporting cast members, this seductive material never quite comes together. Nevertheless, it will likely attract teen horror fans who flocked to *The Blair Witch Project* (a "foreword" hints at similar trappings, claiming that the story has been pieced together from a collection of papers found sewn into a colonial-era quilt). Ages 12-up.

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### From School Library Journal

Gr 5-9-Journal entries, found and pieced together from pages stitched inside a 17th-century quilt, are said to be the basis of this captivating tale. As her grandmother is executed as a witch by English village folk, Mary Newbury is abducted by a wealthy woman and shipped off to America. During the long, difficult journey,

she makes friends with some of the other Puritan emigrants, finding an older woman to draw her into the community. They join other followers of the Reverend Elias Cornwall to travel to a newly established village deep in the Massachusetts wilderness where their very survival is threatened, not only by the harsh physical conditions, but also, the villagers believe, by savage Native Americans and the presence of the devil among them. The healing skills Mary learned from her grandmother make her useful, but also a target for suspicion. She is befriended by a Native American boy who accepts without question the supernatural talents she must hide from her community. When, inevitably, the village turns against her, she escapes to the woods. There is no more to the story in this volume, but eager readers who visit the accompanying Web site will learn that a sequel is forthcoming. While the quilt premise is an obvious ploy, the historical setting is sound and well developed, and Mary is an entirely believable character. Readers already captivated by stories such as Ann Rinaldi's *Break with Charity* (Harcourt, 1992) or Elizabeth George Speare's *The Witch of Blackbird Pond* (Houghton, 1958) will not want to miss this one.

*Kathleen Isaacs, Edmund Burke School, Washington, DC*

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## **Users Review**

### **From reader reviews:**

#### **Courtney O'Donnell:**

As people who live in often the modest era should be change about what going on or information even knowledge to make these keep up with the era that is always change and move forward. Some of you maybe will certainly update themselves by studying books. It is a good choice in your case but the problems coming to you is you don't know what kind you should start with. This *Witch Child* is our recommendation to cause you to keep up with the world. Why, because this book serves what you want and want in this era.

#### **Brian Register:**

The ability that you get from *Witch Child* will be the more deep you looking the information that hide inside words the more you get thinking about reading it. It does not mean that this book is hard to understand but *Witch Child* giving you enjoyment feeling of reading. The author conveys their point in specific way that can be understood by simply anyone who read it because the author of this e-book is well-known enough. This book also makes your personal vocabulary increase well. Making it easy to understand then can go along with you, both in printed or e-book style are available. We highly recommend you for having this *Witch Child* instantly.

#### **Gene Conley:**

This book untitled *Witch Child* to be one of several books which best seller in this year, here is because when you read this guide you can get a lot of benefit on it. You will easily to buy this book in the book store or you can order it by using online. The publisher with this book sells the e-book too. It makes you more readily to read this book, since you can read this book in your Cell phone. So there is no reason to you to past this publication from your list.

**Roberta Haile:**

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