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Burning Bright



Synopsis

In 1812, Elinor Pembroke wakes to find her bedchamber in flames and extinguishes them with a thought. At 21, she is old to manifest magical talent, but the evidence is unmistakable: she not only has the ability to start fires, but the far more powerful ability to control and extinguish them. She is an Extraordinary, and the only one in England capable of wielding fire in over one hundred years. As an Extraordinary, she is respected and feared, but to her father, she represents power and prestige for himself. Mr. Pembroke, having spent his life studying magic, is determined to control Elinor and her talent by forcing her to marry where he chooses, a marriage that will produce even more powerful offspring. Trapped between the choices of a loveless marriage or living penniless and dependent on her parents, Elinor takes a third path: she defies tradition and society to join the Royal Navy. Assigned to serve under Captain Miles Ramsay aboard the frigate Athena, she turns her fiery talent on England's enemies, French privateers and vicious pirates preying on English ships in the Caribbean. At first feared by her shipmates, a growing number of victories make her truly part of Athena's crew and bring her joy in her fire. But as her power grows and changes in unexpected ways, Elinor's ability to control it is challenged. She may have the power to destroy her enemies utterly but could it be at the cost of her own life?

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Customer Reviews

I got an ARC of this book on Saturday. I finished it on Sunday. I may have done some reading during church. That's the kind of engaging book this is and one of the highest recommendations I can give it. :) Burning Bright is the story of Elinor Pembroke, a young woman with an Extraordinary talent and an domineering father. Facing a loveless marriage for the sake of her gift Elinor instead joins the Royal Navy where her powers as a Scorcher can be of service, and her life can be her own. There are high seas battles, pirates, politics and just enough romance to tie everything together in a satisfying way. I love Elinor. One of my favorite things is not just that she takes control of her life, but that she does so without giving up who she is. She doesn't suddenly turn into marshal artist butt kicking for goodness, but remains a gentlewoman even as she learns to use her power to fight and even kill. Her continued delight in little things like hot coffee and reading the post keeps her human despite her tremendous power. And her connections to the rest of the crew are delightful. Of particular note was the fact that not everyone liked her. Many did, sure, but there were those who just never warmed up to her either, and I liked the touch of reality that says we don't always get along with everyone even if we can put up with them. :) As for those she did get along with... The secondaries are very well built, so much so that when they are hurt it hits the reader hard. I always felt anxious when the Athena and her crew went into battle because I didn't want to lose any of them! I also have to say something about the cover. It's GORGEOUS, and really works with the story. So if you love a strong heroine, magic, adventure, high seas battles, true love and pirates...what are you waiting for?

Disclaimer: I received a free copy of this book from the publisher in return for an un-biased review. Love that cover! I must admit that in this case I did judge by it's cover and when presented with a list of new ARCs to choose from this was first on my list. I was not disappointed. A young woman suddenly manifests frightening new powers. Instead of staying under her father's thumb and being forced into a loveless marriage, she suddenly she has choices and agency. She acts on it and starts a new life in the Royal Navy. Ok so maybe she did kind of swing a little far to the opposite extreme in her search for autonomy, but there definitely weren't many choices for a single young woman in those days. At least the military provides a way out for her. Elinor is magically gifted but she adjusts to these new powers in a realistic fashion that I appreciated. She wasn't automatically a powerhouse. She is a young lady of modest demeanor

and battle is certainly not in her wheelhouse. She has no knowledge of her abilities, her limits or even how to use them. Thankfully, she ends up assigned to ship with a Captain who is forward thinking enough to create a suitable environment in which she can learn more about these new skills. Of course, things won't stay that way forever. England is at war, and she has made herself a weapon at her country's disposal. This is a great start to a new series. It's Pride & Prejudice meets Darkest Minds meets Horatio Hornblower and I love it! Plus oh Captain, my Captain! Captain Ramsay is delicious and he makes this book officially ship-worthy. (see what I did there?) Pick this one up if you like historical fantasy, or magical romance. It's a keeper!

Regency romance on the high seas, or ships of the line battling pirates with cannons blazing? Why not both? Then throw in magic and you have the story of a young woman who defies expectations. She uses her extraordinary abilities for Navy, country, and new-found friends in ways she would never have dreamed of. I was happy with the twists as the plot unfolded. For some twists, I was astounded, yet the clues were there to see. Some events were just a matter of time, yet was pleasantly surprised when they arrived. I received this as an e-book in exchange for my honest review.

An enthralling tale, well told, Burning Bright takes place in the 1812 British empire but somewhat different from our history. Some people have psychic talents: Seers, Speakers, Movers, Bounders, Shapers, Scorchers... One morning, Elinor wakes up to her bedroom burning. She extinguishes the fire with a thought, revealing herself to be an extraordinary scorcher. Her father, who makes a study of these talents, is overjoyed to find his previously worthless second daughter is now an excellent bargaining chip and sets out to find the person who will make the best offer to marry her. Faced with the choice of an unpleasant marriage or life with her viciously disappointed father, Elinor chooses to offer her services to the Royal Navy in their ongoing war against pirates in the Caribbean. Her struggles to adapt to naval life in a time when women NEVER served, to gain acceptance by the crew, to learn her abilities, to make friends with the captain, to face the enemy and see violent death make Burning Bright a compelling story. Elinor, Captain Ramsey, and the crew of the Athena are lovely characters, well rounded, sympathetic, entertaining. I thoroughly enjoyed them and found the ending particularly satisfying. I loved this book. I was given a copy of this book in exchange for an honest review.

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