



# Being a Witch, and Other Things I Didn't Ask for

*Sara Pascoe*

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## **Being a Witch, and Other Things I Didn't Ask for** Sara Pascoe

When you're fourteen and life has been nothing but hurt and disappointment, maybe it's time to strike out on your own. But after leaving the boring village and foster home for the excitement of London, Raya finds out she's a witch, with this annoying habit of time-travelling – by accident.

And this sarcastic witch's cat Oscar tags along for the ride. But why would she fling herself into the midst of the Essex Witch Trials in 1645 England? After being arrested by Matthew Hopkins, one of history's most notorious witch hunters, her social worker and witch mentor Bryony goes back to try to save them from the gallows.

But returning to present day London remains out of reach with Raya's powers still out of control when they find themselves in 1645 Istanbul/Constantinople. There, life is more amazing than she ever dreamed. Can she stay? And at what cost?

## **Being a Witch, and Other Things I Didn't Ask for Details**

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Author : Sara Pascoe

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# **From Reader Review Being a Witch, and Other Things I Didn't Ask for for online ebook**

## **Kristine Stacke says**

As I said in my update I originally came across this book because I got the author mixed up with the comedian Sara Pascoe! However it was a brilliant find.

The lead character, Rachel/Raya, is incredibly infuriating at different points in the story but you see her change and grow as it progresses which I imagine is similar to real life foster care situations - some kids seem to keep deliberately messing things up but they'll get it eventually.

I really enjoyed the world building in each location and the growth of Raya, Oscar and Bryony's characters throughout.

All in all a fab book and definitely worth a read at all ages teen and up!

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## **Tanya Tate says**

Received from netgalley from an honest review.

DNF @ 4%

I don't think I'm coming back to this since I really didn't interest me like I thought it would.

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## **Lisa says**

Book Title: Being a Witch, and Other Things I Didn't ask for.

Author: Sara Pascoe

Time it took me to read: 22 Days

Review: I was given this to read from Netgalley in return for an honest review. Despite this book being for a younger audience i did enjoy the story and characters. Oscar the sarcastic talking cat was funny and i did enjoy his character the most. My favourite quote from the book was "Oh No Naked with your social worker-maybe even weirder than time travel" this quote did make me giggle. I would of given this book five stars but the word Paki cropped up twice in the story and the context it was used made me feel a little uncomfortable so i gave the book four stars, other than that it was a nice humorous read.

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## **Abi (The Knights Who Say Book) says**

2.5 out of 5

This was my first book gotten through NetGalley, so plenty of thanks to that wonderful site!

Being a Witch was a bit of an up-and-down book for me. It's a rather charming book in some ways, and might go over better with the younger range of YA readers, but I felt like I was on an rough wagon ride drawn by a horse who wasn't quite sure where it was going. First we're thrown into a fairly normal situation, with Raya being a rebel-type kid who's sick of foster homes and wants to run away to London — except that there are also witches. Are witches very common? Are they accepted in society? Does everyone believe in them? We don't know. It's just not explained. That was this book's first mistake. Before you start jumping from one time to another, make sure we know what's going on in *this* time period.

So next there's time traveling. I was intrigued by the idea of where a witch time travels being triggered by subconscious emotions such as guilt, but this is also never explained very thoroughly. (view spoiler) Speaking of plot, there were quite a few things I liked: the plot twist in Istanbul, the build up of suspense during many parts, and how it all wraps up in the end. But it felt like those parts flew by in a flash, (view spoiler) while the set-up dragged on for too long. Basically, I wasn't a fan of how the book was divided into the fun stuff and everything that had to happen to prepare for those parts.

I did enjoy Raya as a character, though. She was a realistic teenager, even when that made her slightly unlikeable: scrappy, a little whiny, and sort of reckless. Seeing her character development is a delight. I did think the ending of the book muddled up that development though. (view spoiler) I thought the Raya we were watching develop would stand up for everyone, not just turn her back on the rude kids.

Unfortunately, the heartwarming story with a side of time travel that we could have had got bogged down by a confusing lack of explanation about a basic premise of the book and too little time spent on the action. I would recommend it to younger readers who are interested in history and don't feel the need for as much background information on the magical elements, but it was not the book for me.

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**Λ?να Θωμ?ρεη says**

I could not finish it. It may be that it was not written in the first person or maybe the development of the text was too poor.

1,5 star

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**Pouting Always says**

Raya is a foster kid whose life hasn't been easy with dead grandparents and a schizophrenic mother, so when she starts seeing things she figures she has schizophrenia like her mother and doesn't know what to do, but in reality she's just a witch. One things leads to another with Raya ending up traveling back in time, first to England in 1645 then from there to Istanbul in the same time period. I didn't really enjoy the writing, it was a little juvenile even considering the main character is a 15 year old. Also the plot line was really up and down for me, like it would pick up and I would get into it but then I would just go what the heck and it would jar me out of it or I would get bored. I do think how ever that someone younger might enjoy this book much

more than I did because I doubt it was written for bitter 21 year olds so there's that. I probably would have enjoyed this much more if I was still in like middle school.

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## **Yesha says**

(Note: I received a copy of this book, in exchange for an honest review. Many thanks to NetGalley, Publishers and author.)

Star: 3.5/5

“Be careful what you wish for..” A line from book exactly goes for the book.

This story is about a witch girl who never had proper relationship with anyone in life, who will learn to value people in her life and respect their love for her during her time travel.

Characters- I loved Oscar in this book. He was fun and wise cat. I really wish I have a talking cat.

Raya- I didn't get her initially, she was so irresponsible and selfish, not ready to accept her witchy things and all. As she does her first time travel, I was interested to know her more. Her character develops very smoothly and steadily as the book progress.

Bryony- she was nice, her character was important in this book, but I think the whole focus was on Raya, maybe that's why she gets less attention. When you picture a tutor in mind you want them little strict, smart, and influential but here she was exactly opposite. Well, I don't want judge anything.  
All secondary characters were nice too.

Few thing I liked about book were- the historical period and lifestyle of people linked with the main theme of the book. Social issues- racism and xenophobia pointed out remarkably during the time travel. I felt the time travel that solely depended on the Raya's wish was believable, I enjoyed that part the most. Raya's past and her thoughts about life was well explained. Well thought out moral behind the story.

The only thing I didn't like was- Pace of the book, it had on and off effect on me. I feel, there was little more seriousness than the fun it required. Otherwise everything was fine. Something different than regular witch books.

This is a kind of a book that all parents wish their teens to read. Both adults and YAs will enjoy reading this story.

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## **Ashley says**

I shall begin my review by expressing my heartfelt gratitude to the author for giving me this excellent book in exchange for an honest review. Rachel's story charmed me from the beginning and hooked me right through to the end. I enjoyed this book greatly and there was not a single dull moment in it. Whilst fantasy was not my favourite genre, this fantastical novel captured my soul as its magical elements were beautifully tinged with neurological elements. Being A Witch explores the themes of love and self-actualisation at its core. It is about how a witch journeys through her lack of self-acceptance to her ascertainment of who she

really is and the strength she possesses as a witch, not just literally but also in a figurative way. Rachel's story resonated deeply with me for both of us strive to find spiritual love and recognise its power. I would like to commend Sara Pascoe for her brilliance of narrative style which transpired so much warmth and charm; she certainly sees the best in each and every one of her characters.

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## **Jessica | Booked J says**

*A copy of this novel was provided through NetGalley by the publisher in exchange for an honest review. This does not effect my opinions in any way.*

I have this itching desire to read everything witch related that I can get my hands on, so upon reading the brief summary of Sara Pascoe's charming novel *Being a Witch and Other Things I Didn't Ask For* it's not surprising to hear that I had to read it. I had a bit of trouble getting into it at first (perhaps I am out of its targeted age range) and there were times I felt like it was all over the place, but for the most part it was a fun read.

The first thing I need to say is that you should give it a bit of time to get into its groove. Because once it gets there, it really gets things moving. *Being a Witch and Other Things I Didn't Ask For* has its flaws and will certainly not be for everyone, but it's such a solid read that I see it being one of those books. The sort of novel that gets preteens/teens reading for real. I felt out of touch with the way it was written/portrayed sometimes but that isn't necessarily a bad thing.

Continued: BOOKEDJ

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## **Weezie says**

"War paint"

"Bad case of schizophrenia"

Nah.

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## **♥ Aly ♥ says**

(Note: I received a copy of this book in exchange for an honest review. Many thanks to NetGalley, Publishers and author.)

Rating: 3/5

Characters- I enjoyed most of the characters. I did not like how some characters were talked about and then were never mentioned again. Although, I get it because of the time travel. Raya was an excellent character. She was bouncing around foster homes and was having a difficult time. She also was trying to find a new life away from the foster homes. She had a great personality and I liked how the reader could see how she was developing as a character. The other character that I enjoyed was Oscar. Not just because he was a cat (I love cats!), but because of the humor he provided.

Story- I liked the time period aspect. I liked how Raya travelled between time periods that she was thinking about. I also liked how Oscar was along for the ride. I thought that this story was pretty believable. A girl being out there alone because of her schizophrenic mother. A girl starting to see and hear things which leads her to think she is turning into her mother. A girl wanting to find herself and who she is as a person. However, I did not like how the pace would pick up and then slow down. That was one hard thing about this book for me. I found that I had a hard time getting into certain parts of the book compared to others. I also think that I should have been done with this book within a day and instead it took me almost a week.

This overall was a decent book. I would recommend this book for late elementary to middle school students. I believe that they would be able to relate to this book more than I would at that age.

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## **iamnotabookworm says**

I give this story 3.5/5 black cats.

I have to admit, I like stories about witches. In fact, my favorite TV show is Charmed. I remember hurrying home from school so I could watch it every Monday night. I just love those Halliwell sisters. 'Til this day, I still watch it on the web if I have a chance, because unfortunately, I did not get to finish the whole show. So, it's not a surprise that I chose to read this book.

Do you remember bumbling your way through something new? Like a new hobby, or a new craze or your first time to wear high heels? Channel that experience and picture it. That is exactly how the main character- -Rachel or Raya, felt in this story. She has to clumsily learn and work through her new abilities as a witch. Sometimes, she had to learn the hard way. This is a coming-of-age story of Raya as a witch.

The story started slow. It started to get really interesting when the powers of Raya manifested. What sets it apart from the other witch stories is that the story takes you to some places and times in history. It was for me a learning experience about another culture. Being transported to an exotic place set in an earlier era is always exciting for me.

When Raya's powers started to fully unfold, the story also started to peak. I think the highlight of the story is when Raya embraced her gifts. When she accepted who she is, it's when the story flew it's heights. I especially liked that part. I also liked Oscar's witty comments and replies to conversations. Oscar added more life and character to the story.

I give this story 3.5/5 black cats. I enjoyed the story and I am looking forward to the next location of Raya, Oscar and Bryony's adventures. I am looking forward to meeting new and exciting characters just like in this story.

Why does it seem like my life is always interrupted for other people and their problems?

- Sara Pascoe, Being a Witch and Other Things I Didn't Ask For -

Thanks again Netgalley for the copy.

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## Dee Arr says

There are many reasons why I enjoyed this story, and a few why I didn't.

Author Sara Pascoe has crafted a wonderful story about a young girl who is dealing with life and the unfair twists and turns she has been forced to navigate during her fourteen years. In her quest to find herself and establish a life where she can make the decisions and not be forced into situations she would never choose, Raya suddenly discovers that she is an integrator (witch). Her new skills thrust her into a series of adventures, and it becomes imperative that she develops these skills in order to save herself and her companions.

Although currently not indicated on the website, I would guess that this is intended to be a YA novel, and is probably aimed at the younger set (perhaps 13-15). While the historical settings and characters are informative, the inclusion of modern day speech would not be as acceptable to adults as it would be to young teens. This same audience could also overlook the easy and predictable solutions that are used to pull Raya and her friends out of hot water, solutions that adults might find predictable rather than exciting.

Unfortunately, the author has strangely chosen to allow a few more than a handful of vulgarities to sneak onto the pages, including an f-bomb. While I believe the items in the last paragraph may turn off a majority of adults, due to the language I would find it difficult to put the book in the hands of my own children. It is mind-boggling that Ms. Pascoe wouldn't simply omit these few questionable words. There are not many, and they in no way add to the story.

In summary, I would have to say I have mixed feelings about this book. It is an entertaining story for young teenagers that is potentially marred by unnecessary and improper words. I have given it four stars because I usually don't remove stars for language, and thus leave the eventual choice of purchase in the hands of each consumer.

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## Jane Ryder says

I'm not usually a fan of YA -- especially indie YA -- because too many times authors think writing YA means "easier than writing adult." But Sara Pascoe has written an actual, genuine, YA novel, and it kicks ass.

Rachel "Raya" Hollingsworth is a complex, realistic girl living in a complex, realistic world. Yes, her world turns out to include the ability to read minds, communicate with cranky cats, and open portals into the past, but it also includes social workers, foster parents, mental health issues, and homelessness, among other things.

I won't comment too much on plot, but what makes this book such a joy is its characters, anyway. Raya's a real teenager: inappropriately snappy and sullen at times, but we understand it's because she's dealing with things she doesn't know how to handle -- sure, she's relieved she's not schizophrenic, but is being able to hear other people's thoughts much of an improvement? The adults she meets are real, too, which means they don't always make the best decisions or act as perfect role models. Bryony, Raya's social-worker-cum-witch-mentor, makes mistakes and apologizes for them, as when she discovers Raya's foster brother Jake is missing



but didn't notice when Raya herself left the same foster home. Her compassion never wavers, though, and even when she gets frazzled it's easy to see she cares, it's just that her resources are limited. I don't know if it's a message Pascoe intended -- that caring doesn't always look like you think it should or wish it would -- but I think it's a good one for young people.

And of course, I have to mention Oscar. In less adroit hands he'd have become just another wise-cracking human in a cat suit, but Pascoe has created a genuine feline familiar. For all his charming snark as he helps Raya navigate the new worlds in which she finds herself while discovering her powers, there's a part of him that's always CAT, with that peculiar disdain we cat people know and love. If Raya weren't such a strong character herself, he'd totally steal her scenes.

It's a great read for fun, but I also the sensitive handling of social issues that affect young folk. HIGHLY recommended, and I hope to see more from this author!

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### **Susan says**

This has to be one of the best young adult stories I've read in a long while. I personally think it would be enjoyed by any one of any age group above the age of 8 or 9. The story basically revolves around a 14 year old girl named Raya, or Rachel that is put in foster care, and wants to escape the woes of her life in any possible way. Little did she know that she was a witch, until she accidentally traveled back in time. She ventures on these adventures with her cat Oscar, who I think is a lovely, endearing addition to the story.

The story gets very intense and also ends up teaching the reader a little bit of history, when she travels back in time to the witch trials, and actually gets caught by a witch hunter. The story is fast-paced and exciting at this point and has the reader gripping the edge of their seat. The story's pace only builds and builds, making it a very enthralling read. Raya's adventures have a lot of ups and downs and are very engaging.

The story has a lot more to it than it seems to be, as the author brings the woes of children that are put in foster care, to light. It is an important issue that needs addressing in today's world, and she did just that. An adolescent/young adult would definitely find this book interesting and I would strongly recommend this as a read to anyone that's interested in fictional fantasy, for certain. You don't want to miss out on this book!

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