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TWO NATIONS AT WAR. ONE GIRL CAUGHT IN THE MIDDLE. Rain Aranoza is a teenage bomber-pilot from Rodina, a nation of science and fact ruled by the all knowing Aura, where the belief in witches or any type of superstition is outlawed. Rain's regiment is made up of only teenage girls and their role is vital to the war effort against the Crux, a nation of faith and belief, where nature and God are celebrated and worshiped. But Rain is struggling with another battle. She's always had a sense that her nature is different from everyone else's, and that a dormant power threatens to burst out of her. When she encounters a young Scrutiner she falls in love with him, but is torn between what she has been taught is right, and what *feels* right. As her understanding of her latent power grows, the enemy threatens both her friends and her love. She can no longer ignore the power but she must choose how she uses it ... But what will she lose in the process?

## Night Witches Details

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# From Reader Review Night Witches for online ebook

## Nicola Cann says

Enjoyable but I found the end a bit rushed :)

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## Sarah says

**Disclosure:** I received a free copy of this book from the author in exchange for an honest review.

Full review also posted here on [TotalTeenFiction](#)

I'd been using a Night Witches promotional bookmark all summer after picking it up at Leakycon, so I was really excited when the author got in touch with me after discovering we were both from the same city! She very kindly offered me the chance to read and review the book. Night Witches follows Rain as she trains to become a fighter pilot as the war between Rodina and the Crux intensifies.

The book is told from Rain's point of view and at the beginning of the book we're introduced to her and her family. Throughout the book the story focuses on Rain and her cousin Zoya as the two of them train to become pilots. I loved the relationship between the two of them. They're very different, yet are still able to look after each other in their increasingly difficult missions.

Night Witches is set in a sort of futuristic/dystopian world. Rain and Zoya live in the city of Rodina which has shunned religion and old fashioned manufacturing techniques. Everything is made from a material called Bioweave as opposed to the wood and other materials of the Old Nation. The city is at war with the religious people - known as the Crux - and there are legends of witchcraft that the people of Rodina are either frightened of or quick to deny any belief in. It made for a great mix of ideas and genres. I liked the technology Rain and her people use, such as being able to connect to "Aura" - a sort of online hub of information that everyone can use to message each other. I liked what I learnt of the war between the two sides, but I would love to have discovered more about the city and why things had come to be that way. It seemed like there was a lot of unlocked potential there and Night Witches just scratched the surface.

As well as the relationship between Rain and Zoya, there was also a great camaraderie between the girls and their fellow trainees. I liked the humour and dialogue between the two and how they bounced off each other. I really came to feel for them all as they go through some traumatic times and tense battle scenes throughout the book. I also enjoyed the romantic storyline involving Reef and how he and Rain are drawn to each other in the midst of all this craziness.

The real winner for me in Night Witches was the writing which I found to be beautiful and poetic. I loved the dialogue and the slight dialect of the characters. I just got swept away in the story and the wonderful, haunting descriptions. I'll definitely be reading more of this author's books because I adored the unique style.

All throughout the book there was this hint at something more going on and that there was something about Rain herself that was special. I loved the suspense and tension, and the twist towards the end had me hooked and left me unable to put the book down. I loved how everything came to be revealed.

I think overall I would have liked to know more about this wonderful world and discover a bit more of the history, but what was there was thoroughly enjoyable. I loved Rain and Zoya's story and parts really tugged at the heartstrings. If you like books with action, a touch of sci-fi and a bit of supernatural then this book is for you!

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### **Suzanne Rooyen says**

Brilliant! Amazing! Original! Enthralling!

I didn't know what to expect when I picked this up at the library. The cover immediately caught my attention (hooray for a PoC MC on the cover!) and then that blurb. Teenage bomber pilots? Sign me up! This book was astonishingly good, the perfect blend of science and fantasy starring a sympathetic MC who I adored, but really, the secondary characters stole the show here, including a genderqueer pilot.

What really had me captivated though wasn't the MC, or the cool planes or the love interest with tattooed eyelids (creepy and awesome) but rather the world. The author weaves a rich tapestry that pits religion against science, humanity against artificial intelligence and nature against machine using appropriate vocabulary and teenage slang born from the fantastic world the characters live in, which added a most authentic feel to the book.

What sealed the 5-star deal for me was finding out this story was inspired by the real night witches, all-female fighter pilots from the Soviet Union that became a rather formidable force during WWII. The fact that this bit of history is woven into the story, including thematic material gleaned from Stalinist philosophy, added an extra dimension to this book, which I found fascinating and terrifying.

I strongly recommend this book to anyone looking for a strong YA science fantasy featuring diverse characters in an incredibly well-constructed world. Right, I'm off to find more books by this author.

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### **Maja (The Nocturnal Library) says**

Teenage fighter pilots. Did you read what I just wrote? Because I'm not kidding here: Teenage. Fighter. Pilots.

Can I end my review here?

Because really, those three words should be enough to make any living soul desperate to read Night witches. Teenagers are flying planes and fighting wars people, facing enemies both human and supernatural. For those of you who don't know, night witches were Soviet female military aviators in World War II. L.J. Adlington, inspired by their story, created a whole new world in which teenage girls fly military airplanes against a dangerous enemy.

Rodina is a nation willingly lead by an artificial intelligence, Aura. It is the source of all knowledge and the only real decision maker in the country. Not connected, the citizens are lost since they rely on Aura for

everything. They are proud of themselves for shedding the confines of religious beliefs and turning entirely to technology. But at night, when no one is listening, there are whispers of witches just beyond Rodina's borders. There, the Crux reside, a far more primitive, superstitious nation, and the war between the two is brewing.

Rain Aranoza is a girl who is constantly underestimated – by her parents, her cousin and everyone else who matters – until she is invited to take part in a new fighter pilot program. Suddenly, Rain is flying Crux airplanes and discovering new and shocking truths about herself. During this time, she meets Reef, a silent and competent Scrutiner (kind of a law enforcement) and even though he's dangerous for her on many levels, she finds herself unable to stay away.

It's easy enough to draw a parallel between Rodinians and their connection to Aura and our own dependence on the internet. The world Adlington created is a great analogy for our world, and the advantages and flaws she skillfully pointed out can easily be applied to us. The paranormal element, which I won't go into for fear of spoiling things, is just as fascinating.

Night Witches is elegantly written and gorgeously atmospheric. Adlington's descriptions are minimal, yet vivid and strong and beautiful. She is prone to stringing very short sentences that give her narrative a staccato rhythm, which, instead of making her prose seem choppy, makes it fluid, distinctive and unique.

I strongly recommend this for those of you who occasionally like to step away from tropes and expectations. Night Witches is a gorgeous story and one I'm sure you won't regret reading.

L.J. Adlington will stop by The Nocturnal Library in October to talk about the dark Russian mythology she researched for her novel.

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## **Erleen Alvarez says**

Night Witches by LJ Adlington doesn't need aerial flips and maneuvers to become my favorite. Its spellbinding story, kick-ass female characters, and richly imagined world-building are more than enough reasons for it to land a spot in my favorite book of 2013 list.

Rain Aranoza live in a world where superstitious beliefs and witchcraft are shunned and where science and logic thrive. But war is threatening to destroy her land of Rodina by the sun-worshippers called Crux. So she, along with her cousin, Zoya and other chosen female fighter-pilot must train to defend their motherland. But Rain can feel something different, slowly blossoming in her existence and if the girl who looks just like her is right with her accusations, how will she defend the country that is against what she is? And what will the others do to her, if they find out?

**"Flying's easy after all...Wonder what landing's like?."**

Rain Aranoza, also known as Pip (short for Pipsqueak) to her squadron, is an easy to relate to character. She

was underestimated at first, by other people because she was short and she lack experience in flying a plane but after she proved to them that she was worthy enough to be part of the squadron, nobody ever questioned or doubt her anymore. In fact, she's the best in their team, ever Marina Furey, the greatest female pilot in Rodina, was impressed with her talent but she didn't let that thought change her. She's very humble and down-to-earth.

**"Did you hear about the man who invented the rearview mirror? He never looked back..."**

I also love the other characters like, Henke and Rill (even if their appearance were short-lived), Zoya, Dee, Mossie, Ang, Petra, Yeldon, Lida, Marina Furey and Felton. They were all well-devoped characters and their contribution to the story - no matter how big or small - stood out for me.

The romance between Rain and Reef was also well-done. It was slow, sweet and subtle which I think is perfect for the war setting of the story. The world-building was also brilliant. I can picture it clearly in all its glory and how it was slowly ravaged by war. I also love the symbolism of each Nation and why they are in such a conflict.

Rodina was a place where science and logic was the way of life and every decisions was controlled by Aura, an artificial intelligence (or a "hub of collected information" as Steen puts it) that logically calculates, explains and answers everything. On the other hand, the Crux was the place of the god-believers and Sun-worshippers. They were always persecuted by the Rodinans and they had enough of it so they are now fighting back. Basically, it's a war between Science and Religion. Logic versus Faith. Reason versus Emotion. It's a war that is inside each and every one of us, constantly clashing with each other.

**"Most will fall and die. Some will root and thrive; some will root and be weeded. That's the way it goes."**

And finally, I'd like to thank the author for telling me the story of the brave Russian female bomber pilot who fought and sacrificed their lives for their country. The Author's Note at the end of the book is really sad but inspiring. I salute the author for doing a great job in portraying the loyalty and bravery of all the original Night Witches of World War II.

Overall, Night Witches is an awesome read full of memorable characters, creative world-building, thought-provoking story and has the right blend of science, history and magic. I can't recommend this book enough.

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### **Chris Jestin-Thoraval says**

One of the most inspirational books ever. I was heart broken by the end of it - maybe I was wrong but I wanted her to be with Steen, I didn't trust Reef with her secret after some of the things he'd said. I absolutely loved this book. Had me in such an emotional state!! Amazing. I'll remember it down the line.

It also inspired me with a book of my own; and I stole the name Steen. Gomen! xD

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### **Nicole Silverlance says**

3.5/5 ? Maybe

It's ok, not much happens, the fact that her parents just simply believe this random girl Haze that she is their real daughter without questioning anything and then they want Rain dead is just too much for me. That moment is impossible, no matter what you try. Are you telling me they're just going to accept that thing so easily, without hearing Rain's side of the story, without properly looking into all this? And then this whole thing is left in the air. Do they still consider her their daughter as they HAVE FUCKING RAISED HER PEOPLE?!?!?! Or is she just an orphan.

Seriously, what is it with parents in YA novels? Please stop this bullshit with parents being complete assholes who only care about themselves. Please stop

I do like the historical element to this, the fact that this book feels like a tribute to the real night witches. It is a nice way for those who do not know this side of history to find out about these amazing women.

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## Alexa? says

For the ones who happen to cross paths with this book, here are a few things that you need to know.

It is an amazing fantasy world. If you are obsessed with steampunk, electricpunk and all that (like I am) then this is the book for you. It has a very vast universe and the details are amazing.

Futurist and electricity and technology? YES, PLEASE.

Worshipping, witches, gods and light. HELL, YEAH.

Both combined?? SOLD, TAKE MY MONEY.

The story is a bit cliché, but it has a nice beginning. I related so much with the main character, Rain, and her desire to fit in a crowd and be the same as everyone else.

The only thing that stopped me to give it 5★ is the ending. It seemed very rushed and everyone is alive thing. Other than that, if you have a nice and free afternoon, take your tea, darling, is time to read.

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## Sally says

Although I've given this book a lower score, it doesn't mean that it doesn't have merit. This book is enchanting, I especially loved the way it was set in an easily relatable world where you could believe that it was more future fiction than fantasy fiction. This made the whole premise easier to accept and follow. We follow Rain Aranoza as she embarks upon an exciting new career within the armed forces, flying fighter planes against the banned religious enemy, the Crux. She comes up against a number of hurdles in her training and has to struggle with many issues internally as speaking them out loud may get her or her family into serious trouble.

The author's use of language and descriptions were really vivid and worked well in most instances, there were sections with great detail that would draw you in even though little was physically happening and some of the flying/fighting scenes were well written but I did find that they then tailed off and lost momentum. Lots of events would happen in just a paragraph with little or no description after there had been good detail in the preceding segment.

I found Rain's on off flirtation/romance a little boring too if I'm honest, but I think that that's more of a preference thing as I don't engage with romance novels well (not that this one is, by a LONG shot). All in

all, the story was quite charming overall, but not a patch on some of Adlington's other work. I did read the notes at the end of the book about the historical basis for the story which I found FASCINATING and I couldn't help but wish that she'd written THAT story instead, it would have been fantastic.

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## **Chantaal says**

For a summary that promises lots of awesome action and a cover that gorgeous, Night Witches was a let down.

It has all the tired cliches of a dystopian romance, and none of the interesting aspects were strong enough to overcome that. There was a lot of time spent on the more awesome parts - the night bombing badassery - but that was overshadowed by Rain's naivety and confusion about how she was changing. If I had to see "witches don't exist!" one more time, I was going to punch someone. (And seeing as how the only person close enough was my sleeping boyfriend, that would have been bad.)

The dystopia is boring. It's that same old "don't be unique, everyone fall in line" with science being king and any Old World superstitions are what get you taken away and killed by the government.

The romance here is lukewarm at best. I'm still not sure just how the pair fell in love, and they rarely do anything besides look at each other with fuzzy feelings. Also, I got the impression that Rain was maybe twelve-ish, and if Reek is a teen old enough to lose his night vision (that's a thing), then he's probably what, fifteen? Sixteen? Yeah, not an age gap that is appealing. At all.

Then there's climax. Like the author remembered there should be some action and some kind of resolution, but didn't know what to do, so a deus ex machina was thrown in to wrap things up and tada!

No, thank you.

The more I write of this review, the more I realized this book is more of a two star book, not a 2.5 rounded up. What a waste of a fantastic cover.

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## **Kirsty Bicknell says**

In Night Witches L J Adlington lays a breadcrumb trail for the reader, only for us to realise that to reach the heart of the story we have to climb a few obstacles and follow false paths.

L J Adlington cleverly combines fact with fiction revising the true life history of Russian women who flew as part of their Air force in World War II. She honours them in Night Witches, a story of war in a technological era, a world in which the Aura controls all. Unusually the fighting, death and destruction are witnessed and narrated from the viewpoint of Rain Aranoza, a young female flight cadet, promoted to fighting in the war after a near sky-crash with the enemy. Rain is the perfect heroine for this story, she is brave, indignant and altruistic, although naive.

Aside from the perils of war and the advances of the Crux on the country the people also live under the Scrutiners who search for any belief in anything 'abnormal', particularly religion or witches. I found the



supernatural subject of the story versus the very human one of war was interesting and at times it was responsible for eliciting a more emotional response from Rain.

Night Witches has its own romantic element, which I feel gives the story hope. Although the relationship is innocent the reader wants the couple to be together and amongst the drama of the rest of the plot, L J Adlington writes a beautiful side love story.

I enjoyed Night Witches for its originality; its mixture of characters; its fast pace; L J Adlington's gorgeous writing style which takes surprising turns and her use of history as an inspiration.

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### **Kate's Book Spot says**

Firstly I'd like to thank Hachette for sending me this book to read and give an honest review. I was so intrigued by the blurb, it sounded different to anything I've read before and I was very much looking forward to getting started.

The first few pages were exciting and grabbed my attention quickly. There were mentions of 'Aura' which was something I didn't understand at that point but as the story progressed all became clear. Rain's world seemed rather strange to me but I must say that I really enjoyed learning all about the different nations and their customs.

Rain, her cousin Zoya and a group of other youngsters were called in to help in a war among the different nations and they found themselves in danger on more than one occasion, their bravery was inspiring and captivated me entirely. The whole teenage bomber-pilot thing was awesome and it was made even better by adding a touch of witchcraft to the equation, I just loved this combination.

The author successfully held my interest throughout with an intense atmosphere and a sprinkling of magic. A touch of romance softened some of the intensity and in my opinion made this book nicely well-rounded.

This was an action-packed and fast-paced read that gripped me from start to finish.

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### **Imillar says**

Night witches were the teenage Russian female pilots who used to bomb the Germans at the end of the war, and this nugget of WWII history is the starting point for a terrific sci fi fantasy with strong female characters and a vivid look at a country at war with itself. Pip, our heroine, is summoned to fight for a country that only believes in technology. What she finds out in her raids against the Crux, a neighbouring country of magic practitioners, is that she too has supernatural powers, and she has to fight both her urge to use those powers and her fear of being found out. There's a good love story woven into this as well.

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### **Vinny says**

Night Witches is fast-paced from the outset (and keeps it up!), and introduces an intriguing story mixing a number of great themes and ideas that really do come together to keep you hooked from the first page until the very last. A pleasure to have had a chance to read a proof copy from Hodder, I couldn't recommend Night Witches enough!

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**Kristina says**

Parts of this really worked for me in terms of great characters. When it came to the plot points, however, I kept feeling like I was missing parts of the story.

I kept wondering about the background or thinking that there was another book I was supposed to have read first so I could understand this one better. I was left with a lot of questions I had hoped would be answered and while some were, I still wish I knew more about this world.

Overall, the book had some high points that I really enjoyed. I just wish the world was better developed so I could appreciate the whole book a little more.

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