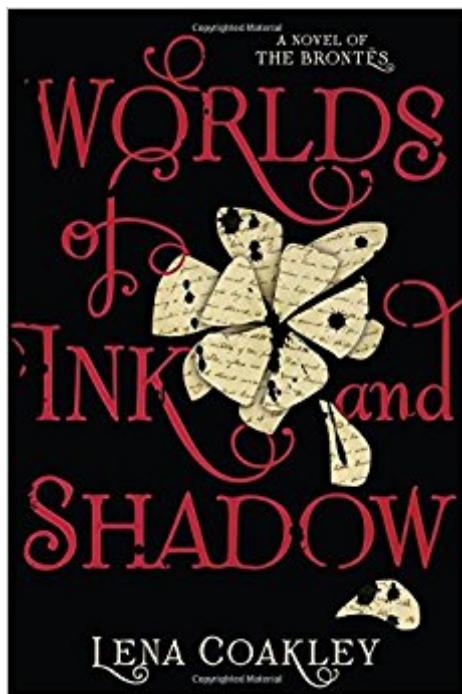


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Worlds Of Ink And Shadow: A Novel Of The Brontës



Synopsis

Charlotte, Branwell, Emily, and Anne. The Brontë siblings find escape from their constrained lives via their rich imaginations. The glittering world of Verdopolis and the romantic and melancholy world of Gondal literally come to life under their pens, offering the sort of romance and intrigue missing from their isolated parsonage home. But at what price? As Branwell begins to slip into madness and the sisters feel their real lives slipping away, they must weigh the cost of their powerful imaginations, even as the characters they have created—“the brooding Rogue and dashing Duke of Zamorna”—refuse to let them go. Gorgeously written and based on the Brontës’ juvenilia, *Worlds of Ink and Shadow* brings to life one of history’s most celebrated literary families in a thrilling, suspenseful fantasy.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Have you ever wondered what it would be like to dive into the worlds you have created or read? If it was possible, what price would you pay to travel to these worlds? Would you bargain away your life? *WORLDS OF INK AND SHADOW* by acclaimed author Lena Coakley (author of *WITCHLANDERS*) explores the real lives of the Brontë siblings --- Charlotte, Emily, Anne and Branwell. History knows Charlotte as the author of *JANE EYRE* and Emily as the author of *WUTHERING HEIGHTS*, but we do not know much about the siblings themselves and their untimely deaths. In *WORLDS OF INK AND SHADOW*, Coakley explores the possibility that the siblings could enter the worlds they created --- and were driven mad by it. In the novel, the Brontës' siblings are living out a meager existence at their parsonage in Yorkshire, England. They

are normal --- save for their fantastic ability to cross over the fictional worlds they have created. Charlotte and Branwell do most of the writing, separately, but their characters exist in the same worlds: Verdopolis and Gondal. Charlotte has created the dashing Duke of Zamorna and Branwell the mysterious Alexander Rogue. Zamorna and Rogue are arch-enemies, and Charlotte and Branwell enjoy pitting the two characters up against each other. It is all fun and games...until they realize a character has appeared that neither of them has created. Suddenly, the worlds they thought they had such a tight grip on begin to spiral out of their control. Their characters that they spent so much time perfecting no longer bend to their will. Plus, their real lives begin to be plagued by their late sisters Maria and Elizabeth, and the siblings begin to believe they are going insane.

***I received this book as a gift in exchange for an honest review via the publisher Anyone who knows me well, knows that I have an absurd, almost neurotic obsession with the Brontës, more specifically, Anne. When I saw the Brontë tagline, I had to have it. I nearly convulsed with excitement. Who am I kidding? I was positively giddy. Immediately, from the very first sentence, I was held captive by this stunning glimpse into the Brontë childhood and their marvelous, fanciful stories. Imaginary worlds, magic, folklore, and history all combine for a lovely re-imagining of the famous Brontë siblings. PROS: That dark, almost Gothic Victorian feeling is in abundance. You'll feel like you've been transported into a Brontë or Austen novel. The rich, dreary scenery and melancholy is quite a diversion. Verdopolis and Gondal are mesmerizing, exhilarating worlds full of intrigue, scandal, and villains. Just the sort of seedy, criminal underworlds and upper-class mischief that sweeps you up into the story. Rogue is a suave rascal, full of gruff comments and spur of the moment adventures. Think Captain Hook. The underlying folklore aspect and magic is a compelling twist that will keep you guessing. Each POV is unique. You see the Wuthering Heights in Emily's devilish attraction to danger and the rush she gets at the corruption. Matters of the heart and soul are her forte. She's a vivacious and excitable young girl full of wonder and imagination. Charlotte is a bit stuck up and proud. She knows she has skill and feels jilted that her brother gets all the attention. At the same time, she's a major control freak. All of these quirks you'll find parallel the true Charlotte and more. Anne is perceptive, realistic, and reigns in the insanity.

What a fascinating book! As a big Jane Eyre (and to a lesser scale Wuthering Heights) fan, any book that fictionalizes the Brontës certainly catches my attention. I am a bit discerning with them, however. Worlds of Ink and Shadow is only the second I've read. The concept is wonderful, a

way to give order and reason to the tragedy of the Brontë family's story. Of the children, two daughters died very young, then Branwell (the only son), Emily, and Anne all died within a year of one another. Charlotte, the last Brontë child, died at 38--and their father outlived them all. Not only does Lena Coakley give us an imaginative reasoning for the children's shortened lives, but she weaves deeply intricate relationships among them, giving their storytelling and the story they live real life. She also gives the book a rather Gothic tone, with the winds from the moors rattling windows, ghosts popping in and out, and mysterious creatures showing up in the middle of the night--all of which works perfectly, of course, for a novel about the Brontës. As a novel itself, without any appreciation of the Brontë's novels, *Worlds of Ink and Shadow* is very good. The glitz of Verdopolis and its goings on contrasts strongly with their real world, working as an escape for both the characters and the reader. Who doesn't want to be able to create their own world and then live out the events? Attending parties, creating scandal, and influencing decisions? Yet, having some knowledge of the Brontës' novels and their backstory only makes it better.

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