

Reviewer Username: Anonymous

School: Troy High School

Grade: Sophomore (10th Grade)

Book Title: The Cruel Prince

Book Author: Holly Black

Rating 1-5 (1-lowest, 5-highest): 4

The Cruel Prince, by Holly Black, narrates the story of Jude Duarte, a girl forced to live in the High Court of Faerie with her parents' murderer in another dimension inhabited by mythical creatures and fairies. As a mortal living in a realm of magic, she is determined to prove her worth and gain respect despite the constant snide remarks and bullying she endures, especially directed by Prince Cardan and his friends. As tension rises among opposing political courts, Jude is forced to navigate through alliances and betrayals, causing her to discover who she is as a human- particularly her capacity for cruelty and ambition and how far she will go to secure her rights.

I think Black did a fantastic job describing an immersive world filled with magic, but still managed to sprinkle in unexpected plot twists, corruption, and complex character development that seem to counter the alluring society she portrays. I enjoyed her writing style too, because it allowed me to completely immerse myself into the world of Elfhome through how she brought it to life with vivid descriptions of beauty and sudden dangers that Jude- one of my favorite characters, seems to attract. Her determination despite her struggles is relatable for most teenagers, as she lives through complex relationships with her family, friends, and enemies. I also enjoyed watching her character grow, especially as she pieces together her identity as a human in another world where she can't seemingly fit in. Another character that I liked, despite being the antagonist, was Cardan Greenbriar, due to the hidden past and depth behind his character that reveal his motives. However, I disliked how the novel's progression seemed to slow in its setup and rising action, leading to redundancy. I also felt like some characters, like Jude's family, were underexplored. The story could've been more enjoyable and interesting with their development, as they play a heavy part in Jude's everyday life. For example, seeing her adoptive parent, Madoc's point of view would be more interesting.

I would recommend this book to readers who enjoy young adult fantasy and are avid readers, as the book was on the lengthier side to read. This book reminds me of *Red Queen* by Victoria Aveyard as they both have a strong female protagonist discovering her powers as the world is politically split by blood type.