

The Burning Sky

by Sherry Thomas



Before Reading

- If you could have a magical ability, what would you choose?
- Do you believe in destiny? Why or why not?
- The opening of the book is quite unique. Read the following opening passage and try to predict what you think will happen?

“Just before the start of Summer Half, in April 1883, a very minor event took place at Eton College, that venerable and illustrious English public school for boys. A sixteen-year-old pupil named Archer Fairfax returned from a three-month absence, caused by a fractured femur, to resume his education.

Almost every word in the preceding sentence is false. Archer Fairfax had not suffered a broken limb. He had never before set foot in Eton. His name was not Archer Fairfax. And he was not, in fact, even a he.

This is the story of a girl who fooled a thousand boys, a boy who fooled an entire country, a partnership that would change the fate of realms, and a power to challenge the greatest tyrant the world had ever known.

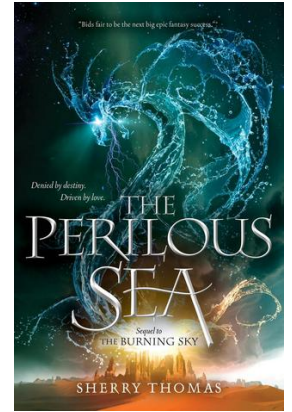
Expect magic.”

During Reading

- What did you think of Sherry Thomas’s world building, especially the way she combined historical fiction (1883 England) with Fantasy?
- Do you think that a girl could get away with disguising herself as a boy in present time?
- Which character can you identify with more, Iolanthe or Prince Titus?
- Titus reads ladies’ magazines for comfort. Did you find this surprising? Funny? What do you read for comfort? What do you think the Bane reads for comfort?
- Historically, many societies have been very patriarchal. How does Sherry Thomas break this concept with her strong female characters? Answer by describing some of the female characters and their achievements.

After Reading

- Can you think of other stories that involve prophecies? How were they similar and/or different from *The Burning Sky*?
- What do you think will happen in the sequel, *The Perilous Sea*?
- Titus likes to visit *Sleeping Beauty* when inside the Crucible. Which fairy tale would you choose to visit?



Activity

Try to make up your own historical fantasy world. Write a short story based in a historical time period with fantasy elements. Share your world and your writing experience with your classmates.