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Archivist Wasp: a novel

By Nicole Kornher-Stace



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Norton Award finalist

YALSA Best Fiction for Young Adults 2016

Kirkus Reviews Best Teen Books of 2015

Book Riot Best of 2015

Buzzfeed 32 Best Fantasy Novels of 2015

ABC Best Books for Young Readers

Los Angeles Times Summer Reading

Locus Recommended Reading

Wasp's job is simple. Hunt ghosts. And every year she has to fight to remain Archivist. Desperate and alone, she strikes a bargain with the ghost of a supersoldier. She will go with him on his underworld hunt for the long-long ghost of his partner and in exchange she will find out more about his pre-apocalyptic world than any Archivist before her. And there is much to know. After all, Archivists are marked from birth to do the holy work of a goddess. They're chosen. They're special. Or so they've been told for four hundred years.

Archivist Wasp fears she is not the chosen one, that she won't survive the trip to the underworld, that the brutal life she has escaped might be better than where she is going. There is only one way to find out.

Praise for *Archivist Wasp*:

"*Archivist Wasp* is a gorgeous and complex book, featuring a deadly girl who traverses an equally deadly landscape. Wasp won me over, and she's sure to find fans among teens and grown-ups alike."

— Phoebe North, author of *Starglass*

"A tremendously inventive and smart novel. *Archivist Wasp* is like Kafka by way of Holly Black and Shirley Jackson, but completely original. Highly recommended."

— Jeff VanderMeer, author of the Southern Reach trilogy

"A gorgeous, disturbing, compelling book with a smart, complicated heroine who bestrides her post-apocalyptic world like a bewildered force of nature. Reading it was a wild ride and a thoroughly satisfying one."

— Delia Sherman, author of *The Freedom Maze*

"One of the most revelatory and sublime books I've ever read, *Archivist Wasp* is a

must-read for fans of post-apocalyptic fiction. Kornher-Stace is a genius, and I can't wait to see what she does next!"

— Tiffany Trent, author of *The Unnaturalists*

"Brutal post-apocalypse meets sci-fi techno-thriller meets a ghost story for the ages in this astonishingly original novel from Nicole Kornher-Stace. You've never read anything like *Archivist Wasp*, but once you have you'll be clamoring for more."

— Mike Allen, author of *Unseaming*

"Sharp as a blade and mythically resonant, *Archivist Wasp* is a post-apocalyptic ghost story unlike anything else I've read. Trust me, you want this book."

— Karina Sumner-Smith, author of *Radiant*

"*Archivist Wasp* turns destiny on its head, and it re-invents the world you know to do it. Strong. Fast. Addictive."

— Darin Bradley, author of *Noise*

"Goes off like a firecracker in the brain: the haunted landscape, the sure-footed, blistering prose — and, of course, the heroine herself, the most excellent *Archivist Wasp*."

— Kelly Link, author of *Get in Trouble*

Praise for Nicole Kornher-Stace:

"In richly textured, atmospheric prose, Kornher-Stace delivers a spellbinding tale of deception, betrayal, and the darker possibilities of playacting."—*Booklist*

"Mesmerizing from the first page and once you get into its flow, a page turner to boot."—*Fantasy Book Critic*

"Absorbing, exciting, intellectually fascinating, emotionally true, and well-crafted, bobbles and all."—*Ideomancer*

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Editorial Review

Review

"Now the story becomes clear for what it is: a story about agency, freedom and revolution. All of sudden, this book Mad-Max-Fury-Roaded me, like a boss. SO! Incredible characters – fleshed-out, human, complicated: check. Beautiful writing: check. Plot that develops like it was written for me: check. A cool mixture of Fantasy and Science Fiction, because ghosts but also super-soldiers: check and check. Reminiscent of everything I love but completely its own thing, a SF YA like I haven't read in a while, *Archivist Wasp* is a book I will treasure."

— Ana Grilo, *The Book Smugglers*

"A jarring yet satisfying reveal, one that fully justifies the obscuring of truth and arrangement of clues that leads up to it. It's also modestly, quietly profound. "We bring our own monsters with us" is a refrain in the book, and as pat as that statement sounds, it's not used glibly. With understated skill, *Archivist Wasp* twists myth, fantasy and science fiction into a resonant tale of erasure and absence — and an aching reminder that regaining what has been lost isn't always the answer."

— Jason Heller, *NPR*

"Creepy and unsettling (but in a good way), with a superb ending."

— Tim, *Prairie Lights*

"Kornher-Stace exhibits immense fluidity and grace of prose. She is able to evoke the creepy, barren, stifled post-collapse world; the other-dimensional byways down which the ghost brings Wasp; and the pre-collapse Project Latchkey environment where Foster works, all in differing but equally vivid styles. The reader will feel the cold and damp, the scalpels and clamps, the fairytale ambiance of a ghostly "waystation," with exactitude and weight. Likewise, Kornher-Stace exhibits fine skills with characterization: Wasp and the ghost both emerge fully rounded. And her action scenes are cinematic."

— Paul Di Filippo, *Locus*

"Wasp is used the properties of her world that might be strange to the reader. And while one character offers a perspective on a more familiar world, that's also not one with which we're familiar. It can be dizzying, but in the way that works that reconfigure expectations often are. Call this novel YA, call it science fiction or science fantasy, call it a new mythology. But by all means, call it compelling."

— Tobias Carroll, *Vol. 1 Brooklyn*

"This is a lean, mean book with a lean, mean main character, and among all the post-apocalyptic dross, it's pure gold."

— Geekly, Inc.

"A ravishing, profane, and bittersweet post-apocalyptic bildungsroman transcends genre into myth. In a desolate future, young girls marked by the goddess Catchkeep fight to the death to become Archivist, needed but feared and shunned for her sacred duty to trap, interrogate, and dispatch ghosts. After three years as Archivist, Wasp is weary of killing, of loneliness, of hunger, of cruelty, of despair, so she barter with a supersoldier's ghost to find his long-dead partner in exchange for a chance at escape. But looking for answers in the land of the dead only reveals that everything Wasp knew was a lie. Equal parts dark fantasy, science fiction, and fable, Wasp's story is structured as a classic hero's journey. Her bleak and brutal world,

limned with the sparest of detail, forges her character: stoic, cynical, with burning compassion at the core; in contrast, the rich and mosaic (if capricious and violent) underworld overflows with symbol and metaphor that tease at deeper meanings never made fully explicit. Meanwhile, the nameless ghost's history, told through disconnected snatches of memory, encompasses heroism, abuse, friendship, and betrayal in a tragedy only redeemed by the heart-rending convergence of their separate narratives. Names (and their absence) form a constant leitmotif, as identity is transformed by the act of claiming it.

Difficult, provocative, and unforgettable—the most dangerous kind of fiction"

— *Kirkus Reviews* (starred review)

"Young adults will be able to relate to Wasp's inner turmoil and her battle to understand a world full of inexplicable hatred and violence. The fast pace and graphic action will draw in reluctant readers.

VERDICT A must-have for dystopian fans who prefer to avoid love stories and pat endings."

— *School Library Journal*

"The full adrenaline ride . . . Kornher-Stace writes a mean action sequence."

— *Publishers Weekly*

"My new favorite forthcoming YA SF. And that's all I'm going to say, because this book needs to pull you in and spin you around a couple times before leading you down its path."

— Paula Willey, Baltimore County Public Library

"GAH. This is exactly what a dystopian novel should be. I was in the mood for something bittersweet and I guess this really hit the spot. Also, the imagery is amazing. I especially loved the early description of the painting of Catchkeep, with hammered-in nails serving as the stars of the constellation."

— Allison Senecal, Book Shop of Fort Collins

"Kornher-Stace builds a vivid and fascinating dark underworld in this hero's journey story about the importance and persistence of memory and how it forms and informs us even after death."

— Nancy Banks, City Stacks Books and Coffee

About the Author

Nicole Kornher-Stace: Nicole Kornher-Stace was born in Philadelphia in 1983, moved from the East Coast to the West Coast and back again by the time she was five, and currently lives in New Paltz, NY, with one husband, three ferrets, one precocious preschooler, and too many books to count.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Harriet White:

Does one one of the book lovers? If so, do you ever feeling doubt while you are in the book store? Try and pick one book that you never know the inside because don't ascertain book by its include may doesn't work the following is difficult job because you are frightened that the inside maybe not since fantastic as in the outside appearance likes. Maybe you answer might be Archivist Wasp: a novel why because the amazing cover that make you consider in regards to the content will not disappoint you actually. The inside or content is usually fantastic as the outside as well as cover. Your reading 6th sense will directly make suggestions to pick up this book.

Louie Laforge:

In this age globalization it is important to someone to receive information. The information will make a professional understand the condition of the world. The condition of the world makes the information quicker to share. You can find a lot of personal references to get information example: internet, newspapers, book, and soon. You can observe that now, a lot of publisher this print many kinds of book. Often the book that recommended for your requirements is Archivist Wasp: a novel this reserve consist a lot of the information on the condition of this world now. That book was represented how do the world has grown up. The words styles that writer make usage of to explain it is easy to understand. The particular writer made some exploration when he makes this book. Here is why this book suited all of you.

Karen Perl:

Beside this Archivist Wasp: a novel in your phone, it might give you a way to get more close to the new knowledge or data. The information and the knowledge you can got here is fresh from oven so don't be worry if you feel like an aged people live in narrow town. It is good thing to have Archivist Wasp: a novel because this book offers for you readable information. Do you occasionally have book but you rarely get what it's all about. Oh come on, that will not happen if you have this in your hand. The Enjoyable option here cannot be questionable, just like treasuring beautiful island. So do you still want to miss the item? Find this book along with read it from at this point!

Anna Hart:

What is your hobby? Have you heard which question when you got pupils? We believe that that concern was given by teacher for their students. Many kinds of hobby, Every person has different hobby. Therefore you know that little person like reading or as reading through become their hobby. You need to understand that reading is very important along with book as to be the point. Book is important thing to increase you knowledge, except your own teacher or lecturer. You see good news or update about something by book. A substantial number of sorts of books that can you choose to use be your object. One of them are these claims Archivist Wasp: a novel.

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