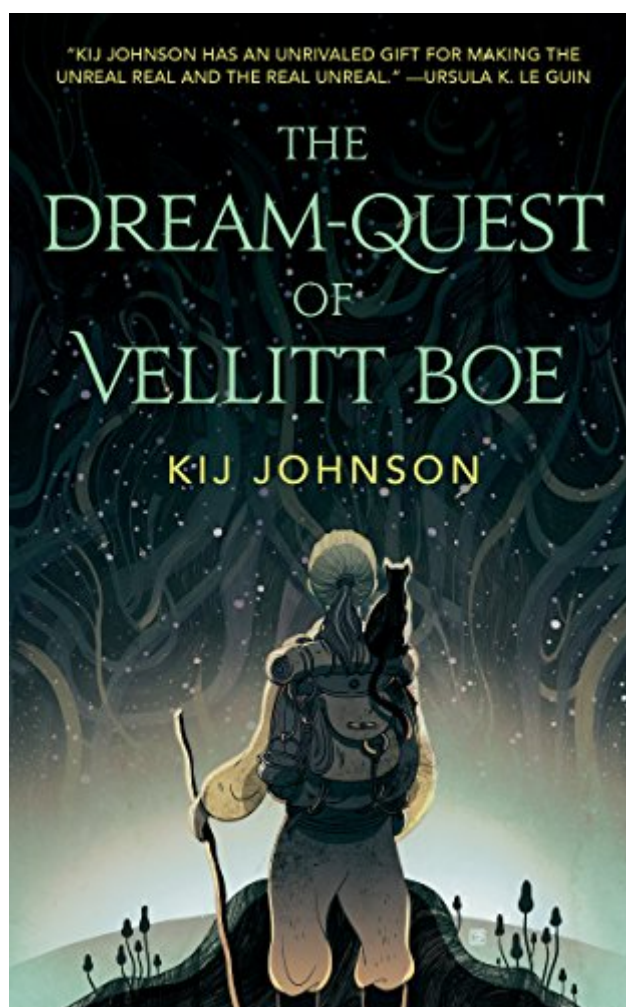


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The Dream-Quest Of Vellitt Boe



Synopsis

Professor Vellitt Boe teaches at the prestigious Ulthar Women's College. When one of her most gifted students elopes with a dreamer from the waking world, Vellitt must retrieve her. "Kij Johnson's haunting novella *The Dream-Quest of Vellitt Boe* is both a commentary on a classic H.P. Lovecraft tale and a profound reflection on a woman's life. Vellitt's quest to find a former student who may be the only person who can save her community takes her through a world governed by a seemingly arbitrary dream logic in which she occasionally glimpses an underlying but mysterious order, a world ruled by capricious gods and populated by the creatures of dreams and nightmares. Those familiar with Lovecraft's work will travel through a fantasy landscape infused with Lovecraftian images viewed from another perspective, but even readers unfamiliar with his work will be enthralled by Vellitt's quest. A remarkable accomplishment that repays rereading." —Pamela Sargent, winner of the Nebula Award

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Book Information

File Size: 964 KB

Print Length: 176 pages

Publisher: Tor.com (August 16, 2016)

Publication Date: August 16, 2016

Sold by: Macmillan

Language: English

ASIN: B01DJ0NARW

Text-to-Speech: Enabled

X-Ray: Not Enabled

Word Wise: Enabled

Lending: Not Enabled

Enhanced Typesetting: Not Enabled

Best Sellers Rank: #11,692 Paid in Kindle Store (See Top 100 Paid in Kindle Store) #114

in Books > Literature & Fiction > Genre Fiction > Horror > Dark Fantasy #129 in Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Literature & Fiction > Horror > Dark Fantasy #1110 in Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Science Fiction & Fantasy > Fantasy

Customer Reviews

Representation matters. That the protagonist of this novella is a middle-aged woman delighted me. I

saw my friends in her. I saw myself in her, and was immediately at home in her narrative. If that was the only thing to recommend this book, however, my response would be an acknowledgement certainly, but not the overwhelming enthusiasm I felt as I read, still feel now that I have finished reading, but not finished thinking about this story. The subject of the quest is a classic in literature. In *Vellitt Boe*, we have a reluctant traveler, a professor from the dreaming world who sets out to retrieve one of her students, the daughter of one of the trustees of the university where Boe teaches. The young woman, Claire, has eloped with a man from the waking world, and the faculty of the university are afraid that her father will shut down the school as a result. So Boe, who was a world traveler in her youth, sets out to bring Claire back, to save her from an ill-conceived alliance. To save her from herself. It doesn't take her long to realize that the stakes are far higher than anyone has imagined. Boe's adventures draw inspiration from Lovecraft, among others, and the world she lives in is slippery as a dream. Time and distance are mutable things, and the world is filled with strange and potentially dangerous creatures. It's also a world where women are not equal participants, which makes Boe an oddity, someone who is not entirely trusted by the men she's forced to deal with. Over the years she's spent as part of the university, she's lost her travel legs, so her journey feels slow and arduous until she begins to recall her traveler's ways. This is an unsentimental story, so if you're looking for romance and happy endings, don't.

“When were women ever anything but footnotes to men’s tales?” “Some people change the world. And some people change the people who change the world, and that’s you.” 4.5 stars “When third-year student Clarie Jurat goes missing from Ulthar’s Women’s College, her Mathematics professor Vellitt Boe sets out to retrieve her. Clarie’s father is one of the College’s Trustees, and it’s well within his power to shut the college down in the face of such scandal. This would prove a devastating loss, as the Women’s College “the newest and humblest of the Seven Colleges of Ulthar’s University” is a sanctuary of sorts for “women who don’t fit anywhere else” in the Six Kingdoms. Vellitt lives in the dream world, a universe crafted from the minds of dreamers in our own world, the waking world. For whatever reason, all of the dreamers seem to be men “and they have dreamed into existence a world that is mostly absent of women, deeply entrenched in sexism, and ruled by gods that are as petty as they are numerous. The Women’s College is a beacon of light in an unkind world” and Vellitt, for one, is determined to keep the flame burning. In her younger days, Vellitt “then known as Veline” was a far-traveller; she walked the lands of the Six Kingdoms, traversed its seas like her mother the sailor, and fell into and escaped from the under-realms. She has evaded zoogs, battled ghouls,

rescued gugs, and marveled at krakens. Sheâ™s seen flying cities and passed over vast undersea civilizations. She knows all ninety-seven stars in the dream-realms sky, and can name the six constellations. Now she must call upon these dusty skills â “ and a few old connections â “ to find Clarie before she crosses into the waking world with the charismatic dreamer Stephan Heller.

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