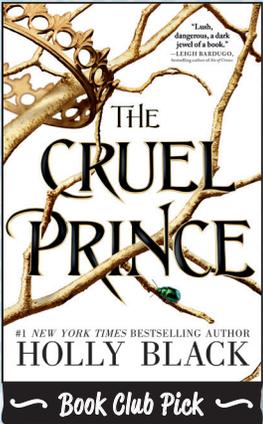


THE CRUEL PRINCE

by HOLLY BLACK

“Lush, dangerous, a dark jewel of a book.”

—Leigh Bardugo



ABOUT THE BOOK:

Jude was seven years old when her parents were murdered and she and her two sisters were stolen away to live in the treacherous High Court of Faerie. Ten years later, Jude wants nothing more than to belong there, despite her mortality. But many of the fey despise humans. Especially Prince Cardan, the youngest and wickedest son of the High King. To win a place at the Court, she must defy him—and face the consequences. In doing so, she becomes embroiled in palace intrigues and deceptions, discovering her own capacity for bloodshed. But as civil war threatens to drown the Courts of Faerie in violence, Jude will need to risk her life in a dangerous alliance to save her sisters, and Faerie itself.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Jude says of the Courts of Faerie, “I know I shouldn’t love it as I do, stolen as I am from the mortal world, my parents murdered. But I love it all the same” (p. 17). Why does Jude want to belong in Elfhome? Even though she’s constantly surrounded by creatures that want to kill her, why does she fight so hard to be accepted?
2. At the beginning of the story, why do you think Cardan hates Jude? Jude seems to think that Cardan simply despises humans at first, but is there more to his hatred than what meets the eye?
3. Do you think Madoc is a good father? From his perspective, he’s done the honorable thing by raising Jude, Taryn, and Vivi and protecting them in Elfhome, and that he’s owed their loyalty because of it. Would Jude, Taryn, and Vivi agree? Why or why not?
4. On page 31, Jude says, “I live with that fear, let it settle into my bones, and ignore it. If I didn’t pretend not to be scared, I would hide.... I refuse to do that. I will not do that.” How does Jude’s fear of faeries transform her character throughout the story?
5. When Jude asks Locke why he’s friends with the fey despite their awfulness, Locke responds, “There is a pleasure in being with them. Taking what we wish, indulging in every terrible thought. There’s safety in being awful” (p. 101). What do you think he means?
6. Why do you think Cardan writes the note on page 140? What does it reveal about his complicated feelings toward Jude?
7. Why do you think Taryn betrays Jude? It’s clear Taryn never wanted to hurt Jude out of malice—so why does she continue to deceive her? Would you forgive your sibling if they did what Taryn did to Jude?
8. Throughout the book, Jude makes several drastic choices, like stabbing her own hand for Prince Dain and slowly poisoning herself. What advice would you give her if you were her friend?
9. Do you think gaining power is a good thing? While power in Faerieland would protect Jude, her pursuit for it is often dangerous and challenges her morality. How do you feel about Jude’s obsession with power?
10. What do you think Jude has in store for Cardan in *The Wicked King*? How do you think their relationship—and Faerieland—will change in the next book?