

Ghostlord: Wildlord: Book 2

Philip Womack

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A girl tries to free an imprisoned spirit and is swept into an ancient magical feud in Philip Womack's fantasy novel *Ghostlord*.

Meg's mother drags her away from London toward a safer, quieter life in the country. They rent an abandoned cottage. But Meg notices strange occurrences here, like a woman transforming into a fox. Then she stumbles across a worn toy horse with an obsidian mirror embedded in its forehead. The mirror contains the imprisoned spirit of Jankin, who pleads for Meg's help before the next full moon, when he is set to be sacrificed. He tricks Meg into a bound contract: if she doesn't free Jankin, she'll be pulled into the darkness with him.

While it is set in the modern age, the book's language is evocative of fairy tales passed down through the generations. It has an archaic vocabulary and it focuses on morality; Meg is besieged by philosophical decisions throughout the story as well, as she is pulled deeper into a white-knuckle world of magic, necromancers, and shape-shifting warriors—a realm that exists beside her own. Rich details help to flesh out this world as Meg continues her work to avoid being sacrificed along with Jankin. She finds an ally in Skander, who shares his father's shadow log, covering the latter's attempts to understand the same magical world. The book's harrowing conclusion leaves tantalizing threads open for future volumes.

Ghostlord is a compelling fantasy novel in which a girl is pulled into a war between good and evil. This series title includes ample context to situate newcomers in its ongoing tale.

JOHN M. MURRAY (January / February 2024)

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