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# Wit'ch War



*Par James Clemens  
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le: 2002-02-05Sorti le: 2002-02-05Format: Ebook Kindle

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**Description :** Description du produitWith Wit'ch Fire and Wit'ch Storm, two novels of extraordinary imaginative power and originality, James Clemens staked his claim to being among the finest writers of fantasy to emerge this decade. Now Clemens adds to his masterpiece in the making with Wit'ch War, the dazzling third volume in the epic saga of The Banned and the Banished . . .In her hands, the young wit'ch Elena holds the awesome energies of blood magick--and more. For the fate of all Alasea hinges on her recovery of the Blood Diary, a potent talisman forged five hundred years ago, then locked away behind wards too strong for any mage to break. But only with the secrets recorded in its pages can Elena defeat the evil magicks of the Dark Lord. The challenge? The Diary lies hidden in A'loa Glen, the fabled city that

belongs to Shorkan, chief lieutenant of the Dark Lord, and his fearsome army. Now, with the aid of the ocean-dwelling Sy-wen and her great dragon, Elena prepares a desperate invasion of A'loa Glen. At her side stands the one-armed warrior Er'ril, her faithful protector and the only man who knows how to unlock the wards surrounding the Blood Diary--a man who also happens to be the brother of the dreaded Shorkan. Meanwhile, Elena's brother, whose magick brings him prophetic dreams, has glimpsed a future in which Elena falls by the deadly sword of . . . Er'ril. But his visions do not always come true. How can he act against his sister's trusted guardian on the basis of a future betrayal that may never happen? For Elena's sake, and for the sake of all Alasea, how can he afford not to?

Prsentation de l'diteur In her hands, the young wit'ch Elena holds the awesome energies of blood magick--and more. For the fate of all Alasea hinges on her recovery of the Blood Diary, a potent talisman forged five hundred years ago, then locked away behind wards too strong for any mage to break. But only with the secrets recorded in its pages can Elena defeat the evil magicks of the Dark Lord. The challenge? The Diary lies hidden in A'loa Glen, the fabled city that belongs to Shorkan, chief lieutenant of the Dark Lord, and his fearsome army. Now, with the aid of the ocean-dwelling Sy-wen and her great dragon, Elena prepares a desperate invasion of A'loa Glen. At her side stands the one-armed warrior Er'ril, her faithful protector and the only man who knows how to unlock the wards surrounding the Blood Diary--a man who also happens to be the brother of the dreaded Shorkan. Meanwhile, Elena's brother, whose magick brings him prophetic dreams, has glimpsed a future in which Elena falls by the deadly sword of . . . Er'ril. But his visions do not always come true. How can he act against his sister's trusted guardian on the basis of a future betrayal that may never happen? For Elena's sake, and for the sake of all Alasea, how can he afford not to? Extrait With only the crash of waves for company, Elena stood by the cliff's edge and stared out across the blue seas. At the horizon, the sun was just dawning, crowning the distant islands of the Archipelago with rosy halos of mist. Closer to the coast, a single-masted fishing trawler fought the tide to ply its trade among the many isles and reefs. Over its sails, gulls and terns argued while hunting the same generous waters. Nearer still, at the base of the steep bluff, the rocky shore was already occupied by the lounging bodies of camping sea lions. The scolding bark of mothers to their pups and the occasional huffing roar of a territorial bull echoed up to her. Sighing, Elena turned her back on the sight. Since the seadragons of the mer'ai had left fifteen days ago, the routines of the coastline were already returning to normal. Such was the resiliency of nature. As if to remind her further of the natural world's strength, a stiff morning breeze tugged at her hair, blowing it into her eyes. Irritated, she pushed back the waving strands with gloved fingers and attempted to trap the stray locks behind her ears, but the winds fought her efforts. It had been over two moons since Er'ril had last cropped her hair, and the length had grown to be a nuisance--too short to fix with ribbons and pins, yet too long to easily manage, especially with her hair beginning to show its curl again. Still, she kept her complaints to herself, fearing Er'ril might take the shears to her once again. She frowned at the thought. She was tired of looking like a boy. Though she had readily accepted the necessity of the disguise while traveling the lands of Alasea, out here in the lonely wilds of the Blisterberry bluffs, there were no eyes to spy upon her and no need to continue the ruse as Er'ril's son--or so she kept telling herself. Yet she was not so sure her guardian held these same assumptions. As a caution, Elena had gone to wearing caps and hats when around Er'ril, hoping he wouldn't notice the growing length of her locks or the fading black dye that had camouflaged her hair. The deep fire of her natural color was finally beginning to reappear at the roots. She pulled out her cap from her belt and corralled her hair under it before hiking back up the coastal trail to the cottage. Why the appearance of her hair should matter so much to her she could not put into words. It was not mere vanity, though she could not deny that a pinch of pride did play a small role in her subterfuge with Er'ril. She was a young woman, after all, and why wouldn't she balk at appearing as a boy? But there was more to it than that. And the true reason was marching down the path toward her with a deep frown. Dressed in a wool sweater against the morning's chill, her brother wore his fiery red hair pulled back from his face with a black leather strap. Reminded of her family by Joach's presence, Elena was ashamed to hide her own heritage under dyes any longer. It was like denying her own parents. As Joach closed the distance between them, Elena recognized the character of the young man's exasperated grimace and his pained green eyes. She had seen it often enough on her father's face. "Aunt My has been looking all over for you," he said as greeting. "My lessons!" Elena darted forward, closing the distance with her brother. "I'd almost forgotten." "Almost?" he teased as she joined him. She scowled at her brother but could not argue against his accusation. In fact, she had completely forgotten about this morning's lesson. It was to be her last instruction on the art of swordplay

before Aunt Mycelle left for Port Rawl to rendezvous with the other half of their party. Kral, Tol'chuk, Mogweed, and Meric were due to meet with Mycelle there in twodays' time. Elena wondered for the hundredth time how they had fared in Shadowbrook. She prayed they were all well. As she and her brother marched back up the trail toward the cottage, Joach mumbled, "El, your head's always in the clouds." She turned in irritation, then saw her brother's quirked smile. Those were the same words her father had used so often to scold Elena when time had slipped away from her. She took her brother's hand in her own. Here was all that was left of her family now. Joach squeezed her gloved hand, and they walked in silence through the fringe forest of wind-whipped cypress and pine. As Flint's cottage appeared on the bluffs ahead, Joach cleared his throat. "El, there's something I've been meaning to ask you." "Hmm?" "When you go to the island . . ." he started. Elena inwardly groaned. She did not want to think of the last leg of their journey to retrieve the Blood Diary from the island of A'loa Glen--especially given Joach's own accounting of the horrors that lay in wait. "I'd like to go back with you. To the island." Elena stumbled a step. "You know that's not possible. You heard Er'ril's plan, Joach." "Yes, but a word from you--" "No," she said. "There's no reason for you to go." With a touch on her arm, Joach pulled her to a stop. "El, I know you want to keep me from further danger, but I have to go back." Shaking free of his hand, she stared him in the eye. "Why? Why do you think you need to go? To protect me?" "No, I'm no fool." Joach stared at his feet. He still would not meet her gaze. "But I had a dream," he whispered. "A dream that has repeated twice over the past half moon since you arrived from the swamps." She stared at her brother. "You think it's one of your weavings?" "I think so." He finally raised his eyes to hers, a slight blush on his cheeks. Joach had discovered he shared their family's heritage of elemental magicks. His skill was dreamweaving, a lost art preserved by only a select few of the Brotherhood. It was the ability to glimpse snatches of future events in the dream plane. Brother Flint and Brother Moris had been working with Joach on testing the level of his magick. Joach nodded toward the cottage ahead. "I haven't told anyone else." "Maybe it's just an ordinary dream," Elena offered. But the part of her that was a wit'ch stirred with her brother's words. Magick. Even the mere mention of it fired her blood. With both her fists fresh to the Rose, the magick all but sang in her heart. Swallowing hard, she closed her spirit against the call of the wit'ch. "What made you think it was a weaving?" Joach scrunched up his face. "I . . . I get this feeling when I'm in aweaving. It's like a thrill in my veins, like my very being is a fire with an inner storm. I felt it during this dream." An inner storm, Elena thought. She knew that sensation when she touched her own wild magick--a raging tempest trapped in her heart screaming with pent-up energy. She found her two hands wringing together with just the remembrance of past flows of raw magick. She forced her hands apart. "Tell me about your dream." Joach bit his lower lip, suddenly reluctant. "Go on," Elena persisted. His voice lowered. "I saw you at the top of a tall spire in A'loa Glen. A black winged beast circled the parapets nearby--" From Publishers Weekly This third, stout volume recounts the dramatic climax of the quest for the Blood Diary, which holds the secret magic of the evil Black Heart. Three groups of do-gooding warriors are trying to track down the diary: Elena, the wit'ch, and her one-armed companion, Er'ril; Elena's Aunt Mycelle (a reformed shape-changer) and her motley crew; and the pirate Kast the Bloodrider and his beloved Sy-wen. Clemens tediously details each group's long journey, which concludes in a final confrontation on the island of A'loa Glen. There, the adventurers must confront the evil mage Shorkan (who happens to be Er'ril's brother). No tyro, Clemens does intelligent things with Elena and her brother, Joach, as they fight not only their enemies but also the dangers of their magical powers. He writes suggestively about shape-changing, and the final battle is so well constructed that it demands to be read at one sitting. But Clemens's decision to reveal only toward the end that the Blood Diary does not in fact hold the real key to the power of the Black Heart (thereby invalidating the purpose of the quest) produces terrific disappointment. (It does, however, suggest that he'll write at least one more novel in this series.) Although the scenario revolves around strong women and an abundantly detailed world, such a plot is hardly a novelty in contemporary fantasy fiction. Weakly executed, this book won't compel the attention of more discriminating readers. Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc.