



Teen Staff Review by:

Rosa Pangilinan



Title:

The King of Crows

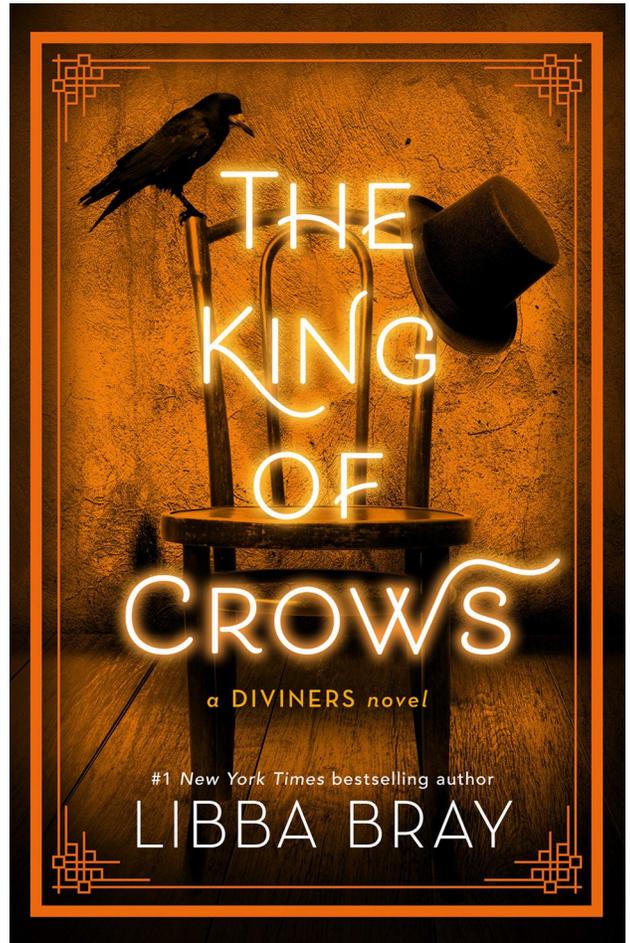


Author:

Libba Bray



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4.5 stars. This book - its publication, and my personal experience finishing it - marks the end of an era. This series has been one of the most important in my life and this finale has become perhaps the most important book within it. It's not a perfect book - but then, what book is? - I definitely have issues with the caricaturesque characterization of the King of Crows, the sluggish pacing (probably a third of this could have been cut), the meandering character arcs, and the easy, anticlimactic plot resolution. But (and I can't believe I'm saying this) all of those take a backseat to what the book, holistically, succeeds in conveying.

If the science fiction genre is the laboratory in which we examine the human condition, and fantasy the terrain in which we find new perspectives on personal choices, then horror is the mirror that forces us to face the corruption within us, within people, and within the social institutions people have built and insist on upholding. King of Crows superbly manages to incorporate all three objectives. It is unflinching and brutal, designed to make readers more than uncomfortable; it was written to make us question everything, to spur us out of our stupefied complacency with the state of everything. This book, this whole series, will always be among the most powerful pieces of literature for that.

And that ending? Those final words in the epilogue chilled me even more than the vengeful corpses and disease-ridden ghosts were able to. It's been days, I haven't been able to stop thinking about it. This is truly the most American of ghost stories and has, in every sense of the word, me shook.