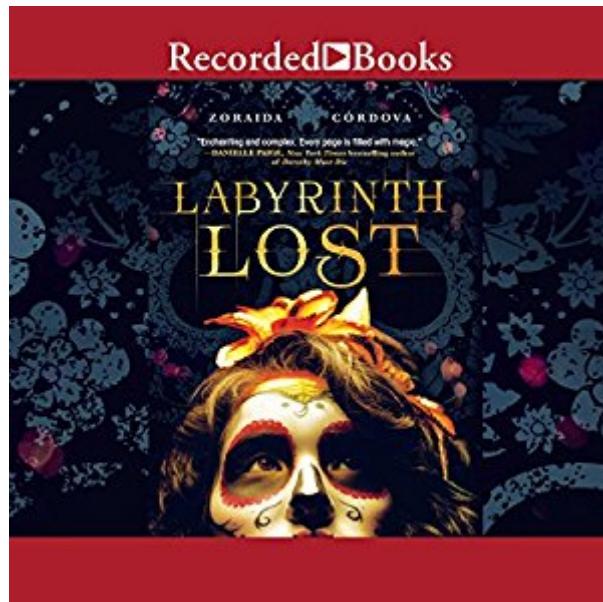


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# Labyrinth Lost



## **Synopsis**

Nothing says Happy Birthday like summoning the spirits of your dead relatives. Alex is a bruja, the most powerful witch in a generation and she hates magic. At her Deathday celebration, Alex performs a spell to rid herself of her power. But it backfires. Her whole family vanishes into thin air, leaving her alone with Nova, a brujo boy she can't trust. A boy whose intentions are as dark as the strange marks on his skin. The only way to get her family back is to travel with Nova to Los Lagos, a land in-between, as dark as Limbo and as strange as Wonderland.

## **Book Information**

Audible Audio Edition

Listening Length: 9 hours and 27 minutes

Program Type: Audiobook

Version: Unabridged

Publisher: Recorded Books

Audible.com Release Date: September 6, 2016

Whispersync for Voice: Ready

Language: English

ASIN: B01LDSJSG4

Best Sellers Rank: #65 in Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Gay & Lesbian #179 in Books > Teens > Science Fiction & Fantasy > Fantasy > Myths & Legends #189 in Books > Teens > Science Fiction & Fantasy > Fantasy > Fairy Tales & Folklore

## **Customer Reviews**

This is an action filled adventure fantasy. For me, it did not cross over to adult reading very well as it was a bit too florid and breathless for me. I had a hard time with the world building and the relentless action. More than once I found myself saying "oh, come on!" to a plot point. However, I do think it will really draw in YA readers with its warm ethnicity and cultural charm. There is a thread here about creating your own destiny vs accepting who you are which I think will be very appealing to young readers. This is a very quick read and Alex is a fun protagonist, learning as she goes. It wasn't quite for me but I don't think I am the intended audience.

Alejandra Mortiz (Alex) lives with her mother and her sisters Lula and Rose in Brooklyn, New York. Alex always wanted to have a normal life without magic. Alex is approaching her Deathday and her powers have not waken yet. Deathday, a bruja's coming-of-age ceremony, is similar to a

quinceañera. After wakening her powers, Alex unfortunately finds out that she is one of the most powerful brujas of her generation, an Encantrix. When she casts a canto to rid of her magic, something goes wrong. Instead of her magic gone, her family ends up being trapped in another dimension. With the help of Nova, a brujo, Alex enters Los Lagos to save her loved ones. The family dynamics are strong between the females in the family. I also like the connection between living and the dead. The first person perspective works well in *Labyrinth Lost*. Zoraída Cárdenas creates a world with magic and diversity. Cárdenas enlightens her readers with Latin American culture and folklore. There aren't many paranormal books rich with culture and diversity in terms of ethnicity and bisexuality. *Labyrinth Lost* is an bewitching coming-of-age journey exploding with magic, love and family values. *Labyrinth Lost* sets a new bar for paranormal fantasy!

This was such a unique read and I have to say I kinda liked it. It kind of brought me back to my days of reading Laini Taylor. It was real rich in world building just like Taylor and I found myself slipping into the storyline with ease. This is a first book in what promises to be an exciting series, but it did read like a first book with lots of details thrown at you. This isn't a bad thing just something I think one should know before going in. The story progressed enough to where I was okay with everything being thrown at me but that is why I gave this four stars instead of five. I would have liked the world spread out a bit, but it really was pretty incredible so again not a bad thing. I also really enjoyed the characters. Alex was such a great character to lead this story. I enjoyed watching her learn about her world and become the star of the story. Nova was just as exciting and I think they made a great pair. Great original story with great promise!

ARC provided by the publisher via Netgalley in exchange for an honest review. Did I just read a unique story about witches, with a full POC cast, that also had a healthy portrayal of bisexuality? At this point, I don't think this book is being marketed correctly, because who in the hell wouldn't want to read this book after knowing those somewhat hidden three points? Then, midway through the book, I realized this book also has faeries, so I was as good as done for by that point and completely ready to sing this book's praises. I really believe this is a hidden gem, and I'm so thankful I put in a request for an ARC of this when I just thought it was about witches. ☀ Spells are for witches. Brujas do cantos. All brujas are witches but not all witches are brujas. ☀ Alex isn't just a bruja, but she is an Encantrix - the most powerful bruja to be in her family for generations. Unfortunately, Alex doesn't want the power or the pain she thinks follows this power. She even goes to an extreme length to first hide then get rid of her powers, but Alex forgets that everything comes

with a price. Her older sister, Lula, is the gorgeous one with the bruja power of healing. Her younger sister, Rose, is a child genius with a special communicative bruja gift. Everyone thinks that Alex's power just isn't showing up, no one expects her to just be hiding it because of a traumatic event from her past. Obviously she couldn't hide it forever, hence the book, and when her family realizes that her power has not only come, but is the most powerful gift able to be given, they start planning her deathday. Deathdays in the bruja community are very special and very grand, sort of like a quinceañera, but with ghosts from your family blessing your journey, too. "That's the thing, my love. Even if you don't think of the dead, the dead are thinking of you." After a couple bad decisions, Alex accidentally casts her entire family away at her deathday celebration, while trying to perform a cantos to get rid of her powers instead of embracing them. This embarks the journey of her and a boy who claims he knows the way to Los Lagos to rescue her family. This story is told in three parts. The first part is in Brooklyn, NY. The second part is Alex and Nova entering Los Lagos, which was really reminiscent to me of Narnia, even though I think it's supposed to be a purgatory, and I loved every second of it. I especially loved Agosto and the rest of his fae. Then, lastly, the third part is their confrontation at the Tree of Souls, where her family is being held against their will. This story was a good surprise; I loved the Latin-American perspective, and was so happy with the acceptance of Alex's bisexuality. Her whole family didn't make a big deal about it, because it's really not a big deal, but that's hard for a lot of authors to realize. There was no drama leading up to it, there was no unnecessary angst because of it, it was just natural, accepted, and beautifully done. I really appreciated it. This all being said, I still have to warn you that there is a love triangle. Well, there will probably be a love triangle later down the line of this series. Alex, in my eyes, always makes her choice clear, but I can still see the triangle developing with its sharp angles ready to pierce my heart. "Not all loves are meant to last forever. Some burn like fire until there is nothing left but ash and black ink on skin." This was a pleasant read that I thoroughly enjoyed being surprised over. Los Lagos was my favorite part, and I think I will read book two just in hopes of seeing more of those magical side characters. There is also a decent sized surprise at the end, which for sure left me wanting some questions answered.

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