

Michaela Riley Receives International Recognition Through the NYC Big Book Award®

WILLIAMSBURG, VA, UNITED STATES, September 24, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The 2025 NYC Big Book Award recognized "Labyrinth of Shadows: The Witch's Rebirth Part I" by Michaela Riley as the category winner of Fantasy.

The competition is judged by experts from different aspects of the book industry, including publishers, writers, editors, designers, booksellers, librarians and professional copywriters. Winners and distinguished favorites are based on overall excellence.

"Labyrinth of Shadows: The Witch's Rebirth Part I" by Michaela Riley - A Dark Fantasy Book You Can't Put Down

Imagine a collapsing Roman Empire in the year 478 AD, ravaged by celestial fire...A prophecy. A witch. A world on the brink.

From award-winning author Michaela Riley comes Labyrinth of Shadows: The Witch's Rebirth Part I, a descent into a dark fantasy realm where myths and legends dance with the clash of steel and arcane power, a tapestry woven with threads of sword and sorcery.

Forget everything you know about witches, for Merona's tale begins not with spellbooks and cauldrons, but with a stolen life and a destiny she never asked for.

The wind howled a mournful dirge across the ravaged fields of Gaul, a land choked by shadow and despair. Everything felt dark. The crops withered, hope had become a forgotten whisper, and the iron grip of the sorcerer Armaeus tightened with each passing day. Yet, embers still flickered in the hearts of the oppressed, fueled by an ancient prophecy, a whispered promise of a witch's rebirth, a hope that must win.



2025 NYC Big Book Award Winner

Whispers of the Seer's prophecy echoed through the desolate villages, foretelling the birth of a witch, a child of the eclipse, destined to either save Gaul or plunge it into eternal darkness. Her arrival would ignite a war unlike any other, a battle not only for land and power, but for the very soul of the world. There was no telling all the witch will do, the sacrifices she would make, or the horrors she would face to deliver her people from Armaeus's tyranny.

Born on Samhain, as the veil between worlds frayed thin, Merona was more than just a child; she was a vessel of ancient power, a beacon of defiance in a land consumed by fear. As her twelfth birthday loomed, the truth of her heritage began to unravel, learning what her power is - a potent blend of earth magic and raw, untamed fury. But with knowledge came danger. Armaeus, the master of shadows, sensed her awakening and prepared his most treacherous game, a labyrinth of illusions and nightmares designed to break her spirit and steal her power.

Protected by the watchful gaze of the Morrigan, the fearsome goddess of war and fate, Merona knew her path would be paved with blood and sacrifice. The world needs to be saved, and she alone held the key. Within the labyrinth, she battled grotesque creatures born of Armaeus's twisted imagination, navigated treacherous traps fueled by dark magic, and faced the chilling truth of her own potential for destruction. But even in the darkest corners, fate guides her way, revealing fragments of the



Author Michaela Riley



"Labyrinth of Shadows: The Witch's Rebirth Part I" by Michaela Riley

prophecy, whispering secrets of her past, and hinting at the strength that lay dormant within.

For Merona's journey was more than just a quest to defeat a sorcerer; it was a trial by fire, a crucible where she would be forged into the weapon Gaul desperately needed. To succeed, she would have to embrace her destiny, confront her deepest fears, and sacrifice everything she held dear. The fate of Gaul rested on her shoulders, a weight that threatened to crush her. But in the face of overwhelming darkness, Merona clung to the fragile ember of hope, determined to reveal the prophecy, unleash her power, and reclaim the light that had been stolen from her people. Whether she emerged as a savior or a destroyer remained to be seen, but one thing was certain: Gaul would never be the same.



2025 NYC Big Book Award winner

Learn more about the series and Michaela Riley by visiting <https://www.meronarebirth.com/>.

NYC Big Book Award received book submissions worldwide. Journalists, well established authors, small and large press, and first time indie authors participated in record numbers. Entries this year were received from the United States as well as countries such as Australia, Canada, China, Dubai, France, Germany, Italy, Portugal, Scotland, Singapore, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom. Cities represented among the entries were Chicago, Hamburg, Los Angeles, Melbourne, New York, Quebec, Rome, San Francisco, Seattle, Singapore, and Victoria.

Publishers included Berrett-Koehler; Brown Books Kids; Central Avenue / Simon & Schuster; Forbes Books; Muse Literary; New Harbinger Publications; New York University Press; Oxford University Press; Pegasus Books; She Writes Press; University of Massachusetts Press to name a few.

Winners included "What is My Legacy?" by Martin Luther King III, Arndrea Waters King, Marc Kielburger and Craig Kielburger; "Mikhail Gorbachev - How he changed our lives" by Bettina Schaefer; "Labyrinth of Shadows: The Witch's Rebirth Part I" by Michaela Riley; The Cooking Lab's "Modernist Bread at Home" by Nathan Myhrvold; and "Wild Fox Ridge" by Xue Mo to name some key titles on the awarded list.

"With so many quality publishers and authors from around the world participating this year, I'm eager to share these books with a global readership," said awards sponsor Gabby Olczak.

View the NYC Big Book distinguished favorites: <https://www.nycbigbookaward.com/2025-favorites>.

NYC Big Book Award is announced every fall. NYC Big Book Award is open to all authors, publishers, and illustrators, and includes submissions from the big five publishers: Penguin Random House, HarperCollins, Hachette, Macmillan, and Simon & Schuster.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

From Virginia Trails to Bestselling Tales: The Witch's Rebirth Series and the Ancestral Inspirations of Michaela Riley

Michaela Riley, the award-winning author behind the captivating "Witch's Rebirth" series, draws inspiration from a life deeply intertwined with nature, family, and a profound connection to her ancestral past. Nestled in the scenic landscapes of Virginia, Michaela's life resonates with the same captivating blend of magic, history, and personal discovery that permeates her books.

Sharing her home with her husband and two distinct canine companions – the majestic red German Shepherd, Morrigan, and the spirited Chihuahua-terrier mix, Carlos – Michaela finds solace and inspiration in the natural beauty surrounding her. But her passion extends beyond the picturesque scenery.

A fervent explorer of her family heritage, Michaela delves into her ancestry, uncovering fascinating narratives and traditions that bridge the gap between the present and generations long past. This pursuit is not merely a hobby; it's a cornerstone of her creativity.

In her free time, Michaela embraces the tranquility and challenge of hiking the local mountains and forests. These aren't just leisurely strolls; they are pilgrimages into her personal history. As she navigates the winding trails, accompanied by the unwavering loyalty of Morrigan and the boundless energy of Carlos, she feels an undeniable connection to her ancestors.

The labyrinthine trails she traverses become metaphorical pathways, leading her closer to understanding the complexities and nuances of her heritage. With each step, the echoes of the past seem to grow louder, whispering secrets and inspiring the intricate tapestry of her stories.

"The Witch's Rebirth" series is, in essence, born from these experiences. Each hike serves as a chapter, each trail a plot point, weaving together the threads of personal discovery and fantastical narratives. Michaela's writing transcends mere storytelling; it's an invitation to embark on a remarkable journey alongside her. She shares the beauty of her explorations, the profound connection she feels with her past, and the magic of uncovering hidden truths.

Through her evocative prose and compelling characters, Michaela Riley offers readers more than just an escape into a world of witches and rebirth. She offers a glimpse into the power of heritage, the beauty of the natural world, and the transformative potential that lies within the pursuit of self-discovery. By exploring her own roots, Michaela has created a world that resonates with readers seeking connection, understanding, and a touch of magic. So, when you open the pages of "The Witch's Rebirth" series, remember the Virginia trails, the loyal dogs, and the unwavering passion of Michaela Riley, the author who found her magic in the footsteps of her ancestors.

See more of the author on:

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<https://www.independentpressaward.com/2025winners>.

Join us at the Awards Dinner on April 25th to celebrate the recipients of both programs as they receive their awards on stage. The dinner is part of the BookCAMP event, a publishing industry conference held in the New York metro area, April 24-25, 2026,

<https://www.independentpressaward.com/ipabookcamp>.

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