YA fantasy is blossoming: lately, we’ve been seeing stories that draw from a widening variety of mythologies and cultures and stories that breathe new life into old tropes (because nothing is ever over). If you’re anything like me, this means you’ve sometimes looked at a clutch of certain unrelated books and thought, “Huh, I wonder what would happen if these guys met up.”

And here you have it: a few poor, unsuspecting characters from YA fantasy, stuck together and forced to do battle. Of them there are heroes, some are villains, some are something in between, and I paid absolutely no attention at all to time period or location because where’s the fun in that? Please let us know if you think any of these outcomes are incorrect (or if you have any other pairs you’d like to see face-off)—we’d be happy to duke it out with you, too.

ZOMBIE vs. Alien


Strength: Endurance

Weakness: Central nervous system


Strength: Mobilization

Weakness: Single combat

The Face-Off: Bring on the apocalypses (apocalypsis?)! In Ireland’s alternate history, the dead rise after the Civil War, ready to feast on the living. In Yancey’s alien-invasion trilogy starter, the aliens bring the apocalypse, unleashing an increasingly devastating series of disasters upon humanity from orbit. At first glance, this one may seem a no-brainer (sorry); these aliens are a highly intelligent, highly weaponized fighting force prepared to take over the planet, and the zombies are, well, zombies. But at the end of the day, these aliens just aren’t properly equipped for this fight. They want to wipe out machines? Zombies don’t use them! They unleash a plague? Zombies are already dead! Psychologically manipulating them into turning on each other? Yeah, okay. These aliens don’t set foot on the planet itself, which makes this a siege situation, and the undead will oust them till the end.

Winner: Zombie

ZOMBIE vs. New Orleans Vampires


Strength: Extreme beauty

Weakness: Other vampires


Strength: Extreme beauty

Weakness: Other vampires

The Face-Off: Cardan, the titular faerie prince and antagonist of Black’s trilogy opener seems, at first glance, to be worlds away from Teo Chupaco’s corpse-raising teen witch: he’s at the center of his court; she’s an outcast. Cardan, like all faeries, can’t lie, but uses illusions to his deadly advantage; Teo’s an outcast because of her dark death magic, which allows her to control an army of monsters. All right, so Cardan may have more allies at the outset, but . . . did you get that part about the army of monsters?

Winner: Witch