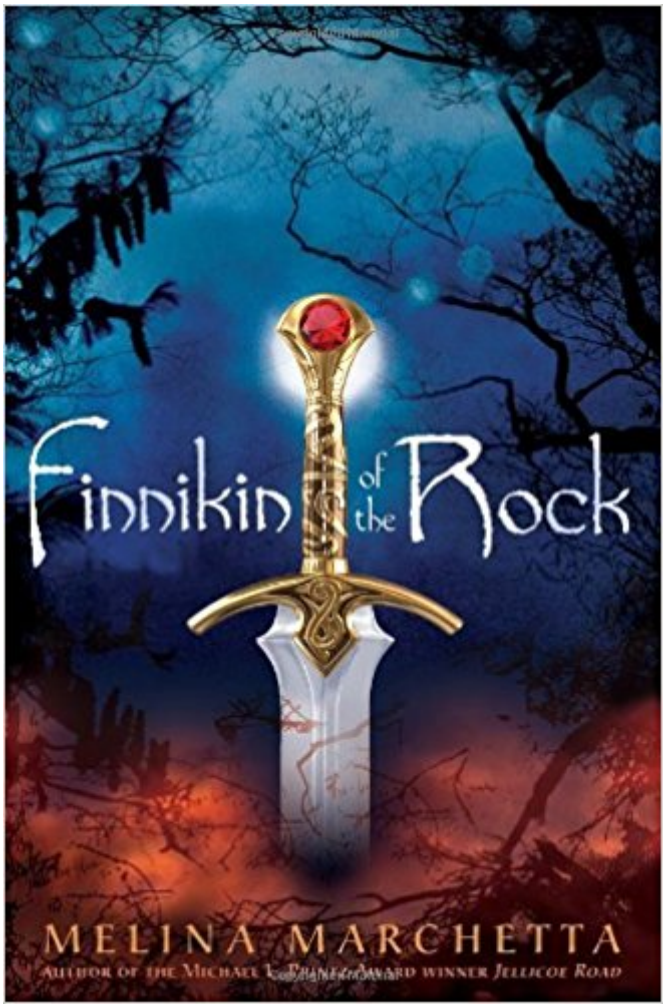
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Finnikin Of The Rock (The Lumatere Chronicles)



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Synopsis

2008 Printz Award Winner Melina Marchetta crafts an epic fantasy of ancient magic, exile, feudal intrigue, and romance that rivets from the first page.Finnikin was only a child during the five days of the unspeakable, when the royal family of Lumatere were brutally murdered, and an imposter seized the throne. Now a curse binds all who remain inside LumatereÃ¢â ¬â„¢s walls, and those who escaped roam the surrounding lands as exiles, persecuted and despairing, dying by the thousands in fever camps. In a narrative crackling with the tension of an imminent storm, Finnikin, now on the cusp of manhood, is compelled to join forces with an arrogant and enigmatic young novice named Evanjalin, who claims that her dark dreams will lead the exiles to a surviving royal child and a way to pierce the cursed barrier and regain the land of Lumatere. But EvanjalinÃ¢â ¬â„¢s unpredictable behavior suggests that she is not what she seems Ã¢â ¬â • and the startling truth will test FinnikinÃ¢â ¬â„¢s faith not only in her, but in all he knows to be true about himself and his destiny.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Starred Review. Grade 8 UpÃ¢â ¬â •Finnikin, son of the head of the King’s Guard, has been in exile for a decade, after the violent takeover of his birthplace, Lumatere, by a usurper, followed by a curse by a priestess that has effectively shut the kingdom off from the outside world. He meets a mysterious young woman, Evanjalin, who claims that Finnikin’s friend Balthazar, heir to the throne, is alive, and sets in motion a complex and stirring series of events that lead Finnikin to confront his

destiny. Evanjalin uses her ability to "walk the sleep" of others, or share in their dreams, as well as her own boldness and sense of purpose, to push events to a climax so that Lumatere can be freed. This novel begins at a slow burn: there are many details to absorb, and the well-drawn maps are a necessity. Then, suddenly, the action turns white-hot and the intricate plot plays out at a pace that keeps readers mesmerized. This is fantasy grounded in a kind of realism seldom seen in the genre. A large cast of unforgettable characters inhabits it, from Finnikin and Evanjalin with their absorbing and intensely emotional relationship, to Froi, a young thief, to the small girl who is Evanjalin's companion as she "walks the sleep." Readers will be rewarded by a shining story of romance, adventure in all of its gritty realism, and high ideals. Those who enjoyed Kristin Cashore's Graceling (Harcourt, 2008) will love this one.Ã¢â ¬â •Sue Giffard, Ethical Culture Fieldston School, New York City Copyright Ã Â© Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

Starred Review In her latest title, Marchetta, author of the 2009 Michael L. Printz Award winner, Jellicoe Road, steps deftly into the fantasy genre. Ten years before the storyÃ¢â ¬â„¢s start, assassins crept into the kingdom of Lumatere and murdered the royal family, with the possible exception of Balthazar, heir to the throne. As rumors circulated that Balthazar survived, a mystic cast a curse that created a magical barrier around the kingdom and prevented thousands who had fled from returning. Marchetta focuses her tale on 19-year-old Finnikin, the son of a former royal guard, who is serving in exile as an apprentice to Sir Topher, a former advisor to the murdered king. While aiding refugees, they meet a young novice who can enter othersÃ¢â ¬â„¢ dreams and claims that Balthazar has chosen Finnikin to Ã¢â ¬Å“take his people home.Ã¢â ¬Â• As Finnikin gathers forces to return to the kingdom, intrigue and double-dealing ensue. The skillful world building includes just enough detail to create a vivid sense of place, and Marchetta maintains suspense with unexpected story arcs. It is the achingly real characters, though, and the relationships that emerge through the captivating dialogue that drive the story. Filled with questions about the impact of exile and the human need to belong, this standout fantasy quickly reveals that its real magic lies in its accomplished writing. Grades 6-10. --Lynn Rutan

After reading Jellicoe Road last year and gushing all about Melina's writing, I was eagerly anticipating starting the rest of her books. While I was excited back then, it's certainly take some time for me to finally pick up Finnikin of the Rock, the first of the Lumatere Chronicles, and I finally did so as a participant in the read-along hosted by Hannah. I honestly had difficulty really getting into the story at the beginning, but eventually, a few chapters in, I found myself extremely invested

in the outcome of this story and the lives of these intricately written characters. Finnikin of the Rock is not the easiest of books to read, but I found it to be well worth my while.The book was daunting to me at the start, and for the first few chapters, I wasn't sure I was going to like this book. This had a lot to do with the way the story is written, which is a road block that I also encountered with Jellicoe Road. After a few chapters, my brain had adjusted to the story and I was eager to see what was going to happen from there. So, I will warn all of you - it does take some time to get invested in this novel.A core element of a good fantasy novel is strong world-building. While there's certainly still a bit of mystery left for the readers, Finnikin of the Rock boasted a nice, strong foundation of the world that this series is set in. Every single place mentioned, every culture referred to is all particular to this novel. While it may be confusing to most readers, I soaked it all up, fascinated by the little details that Melina wove into her bigger picture storyline. It helped that there was a map at the front of the book (which I took a screen cap of) to help me navigate during the journey Finnikin and company take.But what really sets this novel apart, at least for me, are the characters. Melina writes this entire cast of characters that are complex, real and surprisingly easy to relate to. Each character was memorable and unique, and I find that a week or two after finishing the novel, I'm still thinking about them all. This is not to say that I always liked every single character in the book; in fact, I'm pretty sure that I went through a phase where I teetered on the brink of hating each and every single one of them (except, perhaps, Beatriss and Balthazar) because I didn't always like their choices. I loved the fact that this happened because it just drove home the point that these characters aren't necessarily perfect or right all the time, which made them truly pop out to me.Finnikin is actually not my favorite, in spite of the fact that the story mostly revolves around him. He's been journeying with his mentor, Sir Topher, for years, visiting exile camps and trying to find a place to create a "new Lumatere" since the old one appeared to be lost to them. Finnikin grated on my nerves at times. Sometimes, he was too focused on the future and determined to put his past behind him; other times, he dwelt on the past and the people who had died or suffered after the loss of their beloved Lumatere. And there were plenty of times when I felt like he lacked courage. But the reason why I do have a soft spot for him is because this self-doubt, denial and desire to flee or forget is so very human. While I didn't necessarily agree with him all the time, I could understand him and his motives.Evanjalin is my favorite, despite the fact that I was sorely tempted to yell at her at times. She's stubborn and tough, determined and mysterious, kick-ass yet still very vulnerable. She's got an independent nature, and that often leads to her taking the road less traveled in spite of what others would say. It was her combination of strength and vulnerability that really allowed me to feel for her, and fall in love with her character. The one thing that bothered me about her was her

tendency to omit the truth in conversations, often just including the details that were pertinent at the time and nothing more. While I could understand her reasons for doing so, it did bother me, especially when it was so blatantly obvious that she certainly knew more than she let on. When everything is said and done though, Evanjalin is a great character.Majority of the fantasy novels I read always culminate in some epic battle of good versus evil (innocent versus corrupt, etc). This one does not, which caught me off guard. At first, I was up in arms about it, but in the end, I realized that it could not have played out any other way. While this book is about the Lumaterans finding their way home with the help of Evanjalin, it is not about an external battle with swords and weapons (though they do appear, mind you). It is, rather, a quieter, more introspective novel - and the battles raging are mostly internal. Finnikin and Evanjalin (and most of the secondary cast) have individual issues to be dealt with, and this story shows us how they do that even as they reclaim Lumatere for their own people.This novel is another remarkably written, complex piece of work from Melina Marchetta. It’s one of those novels where you really have to get used to the writing and the storytelling first, but where you’ll discover that it’s worth it once you’ve finished. I thoroughly enjoyed Finnikin of the Rock, and am looking forward to continuing the series with Froi of the Exiles this month.

IÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢m kicking myself. ThatÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s how good this book is.IÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢m kicking myself, because I canÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢t believe I didnÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢t read this sooner.This series comes highly recommended by several of my trusted review sources, and, though itÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s an amazing series (judging by the first book, at least), itÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s also incredibly underhyped. And that makes me sad, because Finnikin has everything bookworms could possibly want in a good YA high fantasy: strong and vivid characters, a steady-yet-unpredictable plot (the twist blew my mind, it was so clever), a wonderful romance that does not overpower the rest of the novel, and solid, detailed world-building. I was so happy.I loved every single side character in this book (except for Froi, though he grew on me eventually). TheyÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢re all such fighters, so fierce and strong in their own ways (especially Evanjalin and Trevanion, both of whom I was cheering for SO HARD). TheyÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢ve all undergone hardship or trauma of some sort since the five days of the unspeakable (the name for the assassination of LumatereÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s royal family). The people of Lumatere are refugees, scattered and suffering, and I loved that Marchetta chose to portray a hurting, broken nation rather than one simply corrupt from the inside. Instead of focusing mainly on the cruelty of the current powers at hand, Marchetta focuses on the suffering and the

humanity of the subjects, making their exile a matter of the heart rather than just a political issue. She characterizes the island of Skuldenore not by its boundaries or its nations, but by the people themselves and by the cultures and causes they hold.ItÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s something IÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢ve seen before, but not the way she portrayed it. It felt so fresh and so real, and my heart ached for the people of Lumatere and sympathized with their plight. I was rooting for all of these characters every step of the way.IÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢ve mentioned how the plot is steady, but unpredictable. What I mean by that is that the plot does not meander and stays course, but still has several twists which kept me on the edge of my seat. I wonÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢t spoil it for you, but IÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢ll tell you this: YouÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢ll think you know exactly whatÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s going to happen, but, once you get to a certain point in this book, youÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢ll completely reevaulate your assumptions.Finally, the romance. It was slow-burn and gradual and stubborn, just like the two characters it involved. I loved how fierce both of those characters are, and how they rub off of each other so well. TheyÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢re explosive, but in a slow and growing way, like rocks that create a spark, which expands into a fire that slowly warms you up. Even though they clash in several ways and theyÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢re both strong-willed, they complement each other very nicely. (And, honestly, theyÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢re probably one of my OTPs [One True Pairings].) Their relationship is a great reminder that nobodyÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s perfect and that compromise is necessary in relationships.And the best part about it? Though itÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s intense, itÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s only an undertone to the main plot, never distracting from the rest of the story or the charactersÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢ purpose. I loved that, just like I loved them.If you enjoy YA fantasy and youÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢re looking for some great high fantasy, please, please, please check this book out. ItÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s very rare that I can love a book as completely as I loved this one. Books like this remind me why I love reading so much.

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