



2016

# The Grisha #1: Shadow and Bone

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### BYU ScholarsArchive Citation

Frazier, Cynthia (2016) "The Grisha #1: Shadow and Bone," *Children's Book and Media Review*: Vol. 37 : Iss. 8 , Article 17.  
Available at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/cbmr/vol37/iss8/17>

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# Book Review

**Title:** The Grisha #1: Shadow and Bone

**Author:** Leigh Bardugo

**Reviewer:** Cynthia Frazier

**Publisher:** Henry Holt and Company

**Publication Year:** 2012

**ISBN:** 9780805094596

**Number of Pages:** 369

**Interest Level:** Young Adult

**Rating:** Excellent



## Review

The first book in Bardugo's Grisha trilogy introduces the story of Alina and Malyen, orphans and friends since childhood. As teenagers they are conscripted into the King's First Army whose mission is to cross the Shadow Fold, a magical dark chasm that bisects their homeland of Ravka. The journey is perilous because huge flying creatures called Volcra prey on those attempting to cross. Protecting the travelers are teams of the King's Grisha, sorcerers skilled in the manipulation of matter to control the elements. The greatest of the Grisha, the Darkling, is leading the travelers. When Malyen is seized by one of the hideous Volcra, something happened inside Alina and a strong light bursts forth from her, holding back the dark and allowing Malyen to be saved and the journey completed safely. Alina is taken to Court where her skills and abilities are honed and trained. The Darkling believes her to be a Sun Summoner, a very rare type of Grisha. Alina learns about her newly found abilities, her relationship with Malyen, and the Darkling's true motives.

This dystopian young adult novel is told through the eyes of Alina Sarkov. Relying on detailed description to set the mood, Barduga builds a medieval world using Russian names and words, which can be confusing at times. For instance, Alina's last name should be Sarkova to be a correct feminine version and kvas in the book is a powerful beverage that people get drunk on, where in real life kvas is non-alcoholic. However, her storyline is strong and she constructs complex characters that develop as the plot unfolds. This book won the Amazon Editor's Best Picks Book of the Year in 2012 and was also a School Library Journal Starred Review. Drawn to the story readers will want to find out what happens to Alina, Malyen, the Darkling and of the future of Ravka by reading *Siege and Storm* and *Ruin and Rising*, second and third books in the series.

\*Contains mild sexual content and moderate violence.