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The Impostor Queen

Abigail Packard

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Book Review

Title: The Impostor Queen
Author: Sarah Fine
Reviewer: Abigail Packard
Publisher: Margaret K. McElderry Books
Publication Year: 2016
ISBN: 9781481441902
Number of Pages: 432
Interest Level: Young Adult
Rating: Dependable



Review

The Impostor Queen follows the story of Elli, the Saadella waiting to inherit the throne from the current Valtia of Kupari. When a Valtia dies, her magic, a perfect balance of fire and ice, is passed on to the Saadella who then rules in her stead. However, when the current Valtia dies Elli does not inherit the magic. Instead, her life is thrown upside down and put in mortal danger. She flees the city and the elders who wish to kill her quietly and find the real Valtia. Elli is rescued by Oskar who lives in the Outlands. Through an elderly mentor, Elli realizes that she doesn't have a single drop of magic in her—an impossibility in Kupari. As Oskar and Elli begin to realize that her nonmagical self can actually amplify or nullify others' magic, the situation in Kupari worsens. Enemies begin to invade the country and the elders continue to practice their dark secrets. Elli, Oskar, and a band of magic wielders invade the city and overthrow the evil elders. Elli becomes queen while the Kupari people look toward their uncertain future.

Sarah Fine is an exceptional writer. Her descriptions of the magic of fire and ice were fabulous, sometimes even poetic. Her story was complex with many layers of interesting characters and backgrounds. Yet there were points within the plot that were too obvious (the elders as an evil group that held the real authority in the kingdom being an example). Elli was a refreshing character throughout the story with lots of character growth. She was never a hateful brat, but she definitely had to learn practical skills and dealt with a lot of traumatizing pain and experiences. These were excellent opportunities for her to flourish. And against the norm, Elli was not the chosen one with incredible, unique magic. Instead, she was an oddity; a character without magic. Unique, yes, but in a refreshing way. Fine did an excellent job of tipping that cliché on its head. Overall, a good read for young adult audiences; I am excitedly anticipating *The Cursed Queen*.

*Contains suggested homosexuality and some darker scenes including drinking blood.