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# When the Sea Is Rising Red

Erica Sonzogni

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## Book Review

# When the Sea Is Rising Red

### Author

Cat Hellisen

### Illustrator

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### Reviewer

Erica Sonzogni

### Rating

Dependable

### Level

Young Adult

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### Pages

296

### Year

2012

### Publisher

Farrar Straus Giroux

### ISBN

9780374364755

Felicita is a girl born in privilege to one of the royal houses. She has magical powers, powers that only wealthy people in the village possess. At the beginning of the story, Felicita grieves over the death of her friend, Ilven, who jumped off a cliff to escape living in a royal house where she is told what to do and whom to marry. Felicita decides she does not want to live this life either and runs away into the town to live as a pauper. She befriends a group of degenerates, who live off of little and consider each other family since they do not have any original family of their own. Using magic and the sea, the group tries to get revenge on the royal houses, killing many villagers, Felicita's brother, and almost Felicita herself.

This novel includes many risquÃ© elements and is difficult to follow. There are many different royal houses and lots of made-up language, making the text unclear. The story lacks character development—some characters are meant to remain “mysterious,” but this only makes the book more confusing. For example, Dash, the head of the degenerates that Felicita befriends, has an erratic personality. Some days he is sweet and caring towards his housemates, while at other times he goes missing and has bouts of anger for no reason. The author does not elaborate on his past or why he acts this way. Additionally, Felicita originally leaves her royal home because she does not want to be married off, yet in the end she marries a vampire just to live her life in another village. This book has a lot of potential, but some areas need to be explained in more depth, while other portions are too wordy and detailed.

\*Contains moderate language, moderate sexual content, and moderate substance abuse.