



## The Impostor Queen

*Sarah Fine*

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## **The Impostor Queen** Sarah Fine

Sixteen-year-old Elli was only a child when the Elders of Kupari chose her to succeed the Valtia, the queen who wields infinitely powerful ice and fire magic in service of her people. The only life Elli has known has been in the temple, surrounded by luxury, tutored by magic-wielding priests, preparing for the day when the queen perishes—and the ice and fire find a new home in Elli, who is prophesied to be the most powerful Valtia to ever rule.

But when the queen dies defending the kingdom from invading warriors, the magic doesn't enter Elli. It's nowhere to be found.

Disgraced, Elli flees to the outlands, home of banished criminals—some who would love to see the temple burn with all its priests inside. As she finds her footing in this new world, Elli uncovers devastating new information about the Kupari magic, those who wield it, and the prophecy that foretold her destiny. Torn between her love for her people and her growing loyalty to the banished, Elli struggles to understand the true role she was meant to play. But as war looms, she must choose the right side before the kingdom and its magic are completely destroyed.

## **The Impostor Queen Details**

Date : Published January 5th 2016 by Margaret K. McElderry Books

ISBN : 9781481441902

Author : Sarah Fine

Format : Hardcover 415 pages

Genre : Fantasy, Young Adult, Romance, Magic, Young Adult Fantasy

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## From Reader Review The Impostor Queen for online ebook

### Norah Una Sumner says

#### 3.5 stars

This felt like a 400 pages long prequel. Elli is definitely an interesting character - she's been sheltered all her life so she has to grow up and meet the world pretty fast if she wants to survive. There are many harsh scenes, but I liked how real they are and they made this story feel raw and captivating. Supporting characters are quite interesting as well, but I didn't really connect with any of them. I did like Sig, though and I hope that he won't become the enemy. I just want them all to be friends. \*cries\* However, this book is quite unique when it comes to pacing - it's slow, then it's super action-packed, then it's super slow and a bit boring again, and all of the sudden there are million things happening and so on. I want to read the sequel for sure because I'm wondering how the author's going to develop this story. I loved that balcony scene, I just have to mention it.

The magic aspect is really great and I loved finding out about their abilities and prophecies.

Overall, a good trilogy (I hope) starter with a lot of potential.

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### Chelsea ❤️Peril Please❤️ says

He smiles, one of those rare smiles that makes his eyes crinkle. "When I first found you, I wasn't affected by it, but every day, its hold on me grew stronger. And nowadays, your laugh makes me feel like I'm falling. When you look at me, I'm suddenly warm. The sight of you makes my heart speed. Do you really think the only magic in this world comes from fire and ice?"

DAWWWWW

Andddd here we are again-middle ground. I can't say this was on the lower end of that middle ground, but I still wanted something....*more*. Is it too much to ask for excellence?? Or have I just become a spoiled brat? I think it's the latter, to be perfectly honest, since everyone ADORED this story from beginning to end. And I must say **this story had a lot of wonderful things** that made me very happy....but I'll give you one guess as to what the common theme was in these parts.

That's right-my **favorite thing**, and what had me coming back for more, about this story was **Oskar**. Again,

it all comes down to a boy. What is it with these stories that don't touch my soul...yet **the male leads make a mark on my heart?** I know I'm an easy target when it comes to male leads, but I like to think that I don't easily forget that there is supposed to be a story that surrounds said male lead. Come on now...just because my multiple (MULTIPLE x a TRILLION) 5 stars this year have had a lot of gushing about boys does NOT mean it's ONLY about the new bbf meat. Hot male lead does not a 5 star make...but it certainly doesn't hurt ;).

"To be honest, even if it didn't, there was no way I was letting you go."

"Why?"

He lets out a hard, hollow bark of laughter. "Why did you leave?"

"Why are you answering a question with a question?"

No, for those mistakenly thinking that I have fallen head over heels for all my favorites this year **only because of who I've fallen in love with** (Glass Sword being a wonderful example-I ADORE MY CAL BOY and he certainly would have raised the rating had I hated it, but I LOVED that book even though everyone hated it and NOT ONLY because of Cal. He merely enhanced it. I can see the confusion there, though), **you would be wrong.** And I have been saying this a lot lately and stressing the importance, because I feel like I have went from people seeing all 5 stars on my feed to a very drastic, sudden, and out of nowhere turn where I have blasted everyone's feeds with a string of 2 and 3 stars....so unlike me.

"Elli," Raimo whispers, "what did you do to Oskar?"

I glance over to see Oskar standing next to the roan, looking at me in a way I feel low in my belly like a long, slow pull. "You told me to stick close to him."

"I never told you to take the boy's heart-or to offer him yours."

And the novelty of my low ratings will wear off shortly, I'm sure, seeing as the happy train couldn't last all year-that's impossible. But I still feel I need to preface all my reviews in this way because it **feels so foreign to be bashing book after book** just because they weren't for *me*. \*Shrugs\* I guess there just isn't anything I can do about it....so I will make this short and sweet with a few paragraphs about what I liked, didn't like, and only mildly liked.

**The story:** Ehhhh....Super good idea??? Just kind of...blah. Now, I will say this story had many spurts where my heart beat faster and my eyes became glued to the page, but they were few and far between and not as drawn out as I'd like them to be. The beginning, to me, wasn't boring like people said, more just...hard to connect to. Not because the idea wasn't cool, but because I didn't connect to Elli much...or her struggles. So, **great ideas** and nuggets of epic **lost in a sea of could-be's** and 'I wish's (how the hell should that be spelled because wishes isn't right...).

**The writing:** Addicting, flowed well, not a problem at all. I really enjoyed this author's style of writing. I just wish there were more perilous scenes...or like my Snake said-That they were a little longer.

**The main character, Elli:** I did like her-really. I really did. But I didn't FIGHT for her in my head. I didn't

OBSESS about what was to come for her. All I really cared about concerning Elli....was when Oskar would be coming back. And I think that applies in the 'story' category, as well. Oops.

**Oskar:** Annnnnnd another wonderful, tortured, self-sacrificing male lead who **stole my heart**, slowly but surely. I loved him from the moment I met him....but it wasn't until a certain, ahem, moment that I was all heart eye emojis and screaming his name in caps to anyone that would listen (I lie, I text it anyway). **He was fierce, loyal, protective**, and totally worth this read. And hey, I can't say my slump is completely gone, but he did a WONDERFUL job of making me squee and taking my breath away. **His love for Elli was absolutely ADORABLE** (little blusher, he be) and his determination to keep his family and her safe was something to behold...I just wish there had been more of it. I would have had a lot more to say about this whole book, had there been.

So, yeah, I'd say this book was a predominant win mostly because of my dear Oskar, and that's honestly okay with me. Sometimes it bothers me, but other times it is just what I need-and here?? **A hot male lead** to obsess and highlight and obsess (twice. I said this TWO times) about is just what I needed to start my week off right. So....onto the next book. It's a finale of a favorite series of all time. And we all know how THAT has been going this year. Lord, help me.

*For more of my reviews, please visit:*

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**Another book where my only love stems from the male lead....**though, Oskar was hard not to raise a star for. I ADORED HIM AGHHHHHH OSKAR <3

RTC!!!!

\*\*\*\*\*

**Part three...** with other Hufflepuff motherfuckers, as well :D

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**Rashika (is tired) says**

*\*\*\*This review has also been posted on The Social Potato*

Sarah Fine is one of my favorite authors and so far, I've read 5 books by her (and need to read a bunch more to complete series but I am not ready to say goodbye because that's how I roll.) **The Impostor Queen is hands down my favorite book that Sarah Fine has ever written.** This book is AMAZING and shows how much Sarah has grown as a writer. She always crafted amazing worlds and fantastic characters but she goes

above and beyond with this book. *The Impostor Queen*, simply put, blew my fucking mind. This book has magic, diversity and awesomeness. What else could I want?

Elli is our wonderful, clueless, naive female lead. Or at least that is what she is at the beginning of the novel. She has blindly followed the Elders of Kupari, and never questioned them. That is, until her powers don't manifest when the Valtia dies. She is forced to flee (or die) when this happens and leave her first love, Mim behind. She has no skills though and no way to fend for herself and there are consequences for this (which is great because I am so tired of clueless MCs magically surviving the wild without any injuries.)

Over the course of the novel, Elli blooms and develops as a character. **She steps outside of the privileged world she was raised in and adapts to the new world she finds herself in.** Her transition is so fantastic and I LOVED seeing her try to figure out her place in this new world.

The world of this novel is beautifully built. Sometimes, with fantasy, it feels like you are re-entering different variations of a similar world but I never felt that way with *The Impostor Queen*. **Sarah took the world and made it her own.** The way magic works in this world, the prophecies, the hierarchies, **EVERYTHING.**

You might know me as the kid who is impatient and tends to like fast paced action but Fine is just fabulous (I feel like a broken record right now since I've said this so many times.) The way she paces the novel is wonderful. **The plot develops nicely and there are enough things going on at any given point, enough mysteries to figure out that the book pretty much had my full attention from the start until I turned the last page with my emotions overflowing.**

Also, because I love diversity, I AM JUST SO HAPPY that this book features it. Fine has always done a fantastic job of featuring diverse characters in her books (which is also why she is amazeballs) but this is the first fantasy I've read that featured an MC that wasn't straight (I have read fantasies that feature lgbtqia+ characters but never the main character...unless of course, I am forgetting a book in which case, oops?) I know there are a bunch more out there but it is SO important to have all sorts of diversity across all genres and I am glad that diversity is starting to show itself in fantasy. **The only real qualm I have is that I wish Elli's relationship with Mim was explored a little bit more.**

That said, the romance in this book is wonderful. Oscar is a cute little gruff and I have feels. He is a little rough around the edges but he cares deeply for those that matter to him and he is never an asshole. Yes, we do have a winner here.

If you are a fan of fantasy, this book is 100% worth checking out when it comes out next month. It is well written, well developed, and remarkable. It's definitely a favorite book of the year and one I won't fail to recommend and push at people's faces.

*Note that I received an eARC of this book in exchange for an honest review*

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### **Stacee says**

This was absolutely stunning. The world building, the magic, the characters. All of it.

I loved Elli. I love her loyalty and her quiet fierceness. She has so much responsibility resting on her

shoulders, it was interesting to see her growth and how things shifted. There are a lot of great characters: some good and some deliciously horrid. I couldn't even begin to explain why I loved them.

I wasn't lost in any part of the explanation. There aren't eleventy billion names that look the same or multiple POVs {although I would cut a bitch to be in Oskar's head for just one chapter}. For me, it was a perfect high fantasy.

I was absolutely captivated by the very first page and I loved every single word. The ending is sort of cliffhanger, but satisfying and has an excellent set up for the next book. I can't wait to see what's next.

\*\*Huge thanks to Simon and Schuster for the invitation to read\*\*

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### **Alienor ✕ French Frowner ✕ says**

**The only one that matters is :** Would I've liked this novel more if Ellie had stopped ONE FUCKING SECOND with her endless inner questions? Because it drove me nuts? But I guess we'll never know? Yet again, I seem to be the only one who was bothered by this? Perhaps because once I first noticed it I couldn't unsee it? Finally, why do her questions always come by pair?

### **Let's write this review that way because apparently that's a thing?**

What's better than discovering who you are when everything you knew was a lie?  
Does the wonderful fact that she's flawed can make up for the annoyance?

What IS it with all the growling lately?

I'm sorry because you're nice and all but - After promising first impressions you were such a bore and I'm already starting to forget you? (such a long question which isn't really a question, sorry?)

Can we have more of this -

*"The fire wielder has a wide grin on his face. "Can you see it? Can you feel it?" He lets out a shaky chuckle. "Chaos," he mouths."*

PLEASE? (view spoiler)

Can we savor the fact that there's neither love triangle nor instalove?  
Can I shed a tear because I didn't really care for it?  
(Why is lust always referred as "*this low pull in her belly*"? ← Can I unsee that word once and for all?)

Why is Ellie so easily and conveniently saved every freaking time she needs it?

Can we stop using that annoying I Know Things But I Won't Tell device to bring more angst in the story?  
(view spoiler)

Why was it so hard to get through the beginning?  
Is it me or the pacing is a little off, jumping from rushed scenes to dragged out ones?

How something that seems so detailed at first glance can be so very vague at the same time?  
Are we going to learn more about the villains *and* the rest of the world at some point?

What's up with the generic (and roll eyes worthy) romantic lines as "*and though he is made of ice, he sets me on fire*" (wow, didn't see that one coming) or "*when you look at me, I'm suddenly warm*"?  
**WHAT'S UP WITH ALL THE QUESTIONS?**

Don't get me wrong, I still think that the premise was interesting but in the end, The Impostor Queen - while entertaining - is **pretty generic and I felt meh about it?**

\*buddy-read with my favorite Hufflepuff, Chelsea\*

*For more of my reviews, please visit:*

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### **Lola says**

Unless you insist that this will blow my mind in a few chapters, and you can really, really bet on that, I am stopping my reading at page ninety.

Everything is just “okay” about this book or so: the main character, the secondary characters, the world-building, the magic, the atmosphere, the nonexistent but soon to become – I think – romance and the plot. The writing is really good, though.

Elli is not a strong heroine, in fact, she seems pretty fragile to me. She also feels much younger than she actually is, which is sixteen. She's a gentle soul, but is that enough to be queen? I don't think so.

There has been so little action so far, when the potential is clearly there. I'm normally very entertained by princesses, and queens and life at court, but all Elli thinks about is her Valtia, her maid and the magic that will soon be unleashed from inside her. Truth be told, she's a pretty boring person.

And there is no magic inside her.

And this is just not delivering.

Maybe I'll come back to it someday, but for now it's a DNF.

## Maggie ? (Reader in Wonderland) says

***“You could be either their most powerful asset? or their worst enemy.”***

*The Impostor Queen* pulled me in and didn't let go till the end. It managed to tear me up more than a few times. *\*And it's quite hard for a book to manage to make me cry.* \* But this story was such a beautiful and epic ride full of magic, mayhem, adventure, self discovery, friendship and love. It warmed my heart, it made me cry and laugh and ship, root for the heroine and be proud of her.

### My (kind of) summary:

When the priests found Elli at four years old, they recognized her as the Saadella (similar term to princess) and the next in line to be Valtia - Queen who is a vessel for unimaginable power of ice and fire at a complete balance. She was raised by old, secretive priests and spent twelve years of her young life at the temple, training to become the next queen of the mighty nation Kupari. But nothing develops quite as Elli and everyone else in the temple expects and her once certain future of serving and protecting her people turns completely upside down. She is forced to reconsider everything she believed in, everything she has been told by the priests, for they are not who they seemed to be, but she might not be as well.

***“Our lives aren't ours, darling,” she murmured. “We are only the caretakers of this magic. We don't use it to protect ourselves - we use it only to protect the Kupari. They call us queens, but what we really are is servants. ”***

I knew before I started this, that Sarah Fine wouldn't disappoint me and boy, I was still surprised by how much I adore it. I kind of had a clear picture of how this book would go in my head, but the author managed to set my little picture on fire and scatter the ashes. That much I was surprised by the events and how this book turned out.

If you have read some other works from Sarah Fine and loved, or at least was intrigued by them, then I definitely recommend to read this book as well.

I have one warning for those who haven't yet read the Goodread annotation - If you hate to be spoiled or to know too much about where the story would go and are interested in this book, I'd rather recommend not to read the annotation. It reveals a lot of things about the plot. I'm really glad I didn't read it before the book!

***“For a moment I recall Mim's pity and think perhaps I understand it perfectly. I'll never know what it feels like to be loved by one, because I must be loved by all. I'll never feel the touch of a lover, because my body is a vessel for magic. It only bothers me sometimes, like when I glance at Mim sitting by the fire on***

*winter evenings. Her secret smile, meant just for me, leaves a pit in my stomach every time. ”*

There is a Queendom. Powerful magic which comes from one female chosen, who is able to wield it, to the next.

The storyline takes some surprising twists and turns, the never boring plot left me on the edge of my seat wondering what will happen next, until I devoured the whole book. There was no dull moment for me. Heroine who changes and slowly develops throughout the book, who has her strengths and faults. And is in love with her maidservant. - Yes! Finally a main heroine who is bisexual. And finally a book where the character's sexuality is not all she is. It's stated there rather matter of factly, because it doesn't define her whole character. But I kind of wished it could've been explored further. More fantasy authors should write about lesbian and bi main heroines in my opinion.

The magic is a wonderful combination of fire and ice. It's a lot more complicated though, and it's very different from any other magic system I have encountered, so it takes some time to understand all the aspects of it, to get used to it. But as the story progresses, reader and the heroine for the matter, gets to understand and love it much more.

**“ You're strong enough to bear anything, Elli. That's why the stars chose you. ”**

It's also a standalone fantasy, from what I understand, the next book will be about a different heroine. \*But I'm not going to read the annotation for that book, because - too-much-information.\*

And I guess I know who it will be and am excited, but also sad because I will miss Elli and Oskar so much, and even the crazy, old Raimo. And I have a feeling (but it's just a guess), that the new main heroine will meet a certain dark, tortured and power-hungry fire wielder, Sig.

I kind of hope that the book will be told from both the new heroine and Elli's pov actually, but if not, I'm certain that Elli's story is not over just yet. \*It can't be, because the ending.. The ending guys! \*cries\* And that she and other characters will make an important appearances in the final book.

**“ But I learn to endure the pain as well. I am scarred, and I will never be what I was before, but I'm growing stronger. ”**

How I imagined the main heroine Elli:

My song for this book: John Dreamer - Becoming a Legend.

Overall: I don't have much, if anything, bad to say about this book. It definitely deserves higher rating than it gets, just like Sarah Fine deserves far more praise and attention for her books.

Loved it, Loved it, Loved it!

***“All that friendly patience, all that mercy, hiding so much evil.”***

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### **Alyssa says**

This CANNOT be a standalone. Absolutely not.

(20 minutes later)

OH THANK GOODNESS, IT ISN'T.

\*\*\*Review posted on The Eater of Books! blog\*\*\*

The Impostor Queen by Sarah Fine

Book One of The Impostor Queen series

Publisher: Margaret K. McElderry Books

Publication Date: January 5, 2016

Rating: 4 stars

Source: eARC from Edelweiss

Summary (from Goodreads):

Sixteen-year-old Elli was a small child when the Elders of Kupari chose her to succeed the Valtia, the queen who wields infinitely powerful ice and fire magic. Since then, Elli has lived in the temple, surrounded by luxury and tutored by magical priests, as she prepares for the day when the Valtia perishes and the magic finds a new home in her. Elli is destined to be the most powerful Valtia to ever rule.

But when the queen dies defending the kingdom from invading warriors, the magic doesn't enter Elli. It's nowhere to be found.

Disgraced, Elli flees to the outlands, the home of banished criminals—some who would love to see the temple burn with all its priests inside. As she finds her footing in this new world, Elli uncovers devastating new information about the Kupari magic, those who wield it, and the prophecy that foretold her destiny. Torn between the love she has for her people and her growing loyalty to the banished, Elli struggles to understand the true role she was meant to play. But as war looms, she must align with the right side—before the kingdom and its magic are completely destroyed.

What I Liked:

Let me tell you all about the state of PANIC that I was in when I finished this book. At this present moment, Goodreads has this book listed as a standalone (no information about a sequel or anything) So I freaked out because there is NO way the book could end the way it did and NOT have at least one book to follow. Thank goodness for Publishers Weekly Rights Report - I dug up the one from the week of November 3, 2014, which stated that there would be TWO books in this series. Win!

Elli is the Saadela, the girl who will succeed the Valtia of the Kupari when the magic leaves the Valtia and enters Elli. She's been made ready since she was a small child; when the time comes, the Valtia dies, and the magic leaves her... but it doesn't enter Elli. Elli is forced to leave the temple, and she flees to the outlands. A young man finds her almost dead, and takes her to a cavern full of thieves; strangely, a lot of them are wielders of fire, which is strange because any wielders are taken to the temple at a young age. The more Elli learns, the less certain she is of her life at the temple. One thing is for sure - the war is coming now, and Elli will play a decisive role.

I am a huge fan of Sarah Fine's books - I've read ten of her eleven published books (Burn is the odd one out, but I have it for review!). This is book ten for me, and I absolutely loved it. The ending is satisfying but left me wanting so much more (as did book one of her other YA duology - Of Metal and Wishes).

Elli is ignorant and naive at the beginning of this story - she has no idea what the true nature of anyone around her. She is wrapped up in the love of the Valtia, and her handmaiden, Mim. She has people who care about her, and she likes her life. When the Valtia dies, Elli is devastated, and when the magic doesn't enter Elli, she is crushed. She ends up half-dead in the outlands, and a young man helps her. I LOVE Elli's determination to learn the skills she never knew - for example, dressing herself by herself. Elli doesn't ever stop trying to learn, to do more, to earn her keep.

Oskar, the young man who takes her in to his family (his mother Maarika, and little sister, Freya). is stern and compassionate and almost withdrawn. Everyone in the cavern has their secrets, and Oskar is no exception. Elli has her own too. Oskar struggles with his, and Elli wants to help him in any way she can. He's distant, but she never stops trying to help those who are helping her.

As always, Sarah Fine does an amazing job with the characterization of the protagonists and secondary characters. Elli really grew on me (I wasn't sure what to think of her at first), and I loved Oskar from the moment we meet him. Maarika and Freya are easy to like in their own ways. Sig, a young man and former friend of Oskar's, is hot-tempered and difficult to handle, but even he is such a well-constructed character. The "villains", whom I will not disclose, are malicious but we can see why they are the way they are.

I love the world-building of this fantasy novel. The idea of a Valtia (queen who has both ice and fire magic) and a Saadela (empty vessel who will be filled with that power when the current Valtia dies) is an interesting one, fairly original and definitely intriguing. I loved the setting of the outlands the most - it's like Iceland or one of those gorgeous wintry European countries (check out the character names, too!). When the secrets and prophecies and magic unravel, everything starts to make sense. I really like how the magic unfolds in this book, and how big a role it plays.

There is romance! The author had me guessing for a part of the book because I was sure that Elli would fall for this boy in the temple, but it was way too early in the book. You can probably already tell - the love interest is Oskar, and we are introduced to him in the outlands. As soon as he emerges in the story, you KNOW he's the love interest. I like him a lot! He's like a lumberjack. The romance doesn't start as soon as they meet - it's a slow-burn romance, the kind that Fine is really good at writing. I love the romance! No love triangle.

The ending isn't a cliffhanger (not really), but it isn't quite wrapped up, and there is so much more to be discovered in the next book. I wish for a smidgen more of a happy ending in some areas, but then, other areas are happy-ish. Basically I want the sequel. Which is also the conclusion novel. I want it!

What I Did Not Like:

Ehhh. I can't think of anything specific that comes to mind. Maybe more romantic scenes. There were a good amount, and given that Elli was raised like a nun, I understand why Fine held back a bit. Perhaps there will be more in book two (but I doubt it, given something that the author told me about the setup of book two). Still, this book was great! It's getting four stars not because of anything "bad", but because it doesn't feel quite like a five-star read.

Would I Recommend It:

I sooo recommend this novel to any fantasy lover out there! Also anyone who loves a swoony slow-burn romance. Oskar is probably everything I like in a guy (minus the beard, I hate beards. Stubble, maybe). An epic story that will continue in 2017 - don't miss it!

Rating:

4.5 stars -> rounded down to 4 stars (maybe I'm still a tad bit mopey over the ending). No cliffhanger but... the sequel couldn't come fast enough!

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### **Emily May says**

*"Our lives aren't ours, darling," she murmured. "We are only the caretakers of this magic. We don't use it to protect ourselves - we use it only to protect the Kupari. They call us queens, but what we really are is servants."*

3 1/2 stars. The Impostor Queen occasionally suffers from uneven pacing, but it more than makes up for it with a **bloody, well-written combination of fire and ice**.

This book, while brimming with magic, prophecies, friendship and betrayal, is really about what it's like to have a destiny, to be the "chosen one" your whole life, to prepare yourself to be queen and one of the strongest magic wielders that ever lived... and suddenly have that destiny ripped out from underneath you.

This book is about what it's like to discover that you are not what you thought you were - and that people want to kill you for it. This is Elli's story.

The pacing issues are really my only criticism for this book. 430 pages is fairly average for a YA fantasy and yet it feels longer at times, moving from fast-paced "oh my god, what's going to happen?" scenes to long, slow, character-driven chapters. Thankfully, the mystery of the prophecies surrounding Elli, plus the different characters and relationships that come into the story, are enough to keep you reading through the novel's slower parts.

**Elli is a likable, flawed heroine.** Perhaps a little too self-sacrificing for my usual tastes, but this is explained in the context of the story (she has been brought up to dedicate and sacrifice her life for the Kupari). I especially liked the touch of LGBT romance - something we rarely see in YA fantasy - and only wish it had been explored further.

It's an enjoyable, gritty tale, and when the action arrives, it makes for some seriously heart-pounding scenes. It's hard not to be caught up in Elli's life, emotions and struggles - to feel for her, pity her, panic for her and

root for her.

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### **Giselle (Book Nerd Canada) says**

An Electronic Advanced Reader Copy was provided by the publisher via NetGalley for review.

A kingdom where magic is held in the most powerful Queen known as a Valtia. Eli is supposed to succeed the current Queen, but when the magic never comes, she ends up fleeing and finding out more about the outsiders that border her kingdom's lands.

I am now one of the biggest Sarah Fine fans around. Her books just grab my attention and they never seem to let me go. Loved her other books and when I realized she's publishing another I knew I had to read it. This one was right up my alley. Fantasy book with magic, mystery and adventure? Sign me up! I couldn't put this down, even reading this to the very end at three in the morning!! It was that epic!

Elli was such a likeable character. Not only for her determination, but for the sheer tenacity she had for doing the right thing. I like that she was bisexual having her like both genders because love knows no borders. It also helps that I like both of her love interests. Then there's the mystery of where her magic went and how she's in the dark for most of the book like we were. I enjoyed all the magic sequences the most! Loving all the various magical powers that the citizens wielded. It felt like this whole new world where I dropped in and wanted to be a part of.

I kid you not, this book has me singing its high praises and I'm now adding Sarah Fine as an auto-buy author!!! She also writes diverse characters so that's just a huge bonus for me!

RATING 5/5

### QUOTES

"You may doubt anything in this world, but never doubt yourself."

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### **C.G. Drews says**

Oh oh OHHHH IT IS TIME FOR ME TO SHRIEK MY LOVE FOR THIS MAGNANIMOUS NOVEL. I seriously...omg, I cannot even right now. For the first 100 or so pages I thought it was 3-stars? Then 4...and now look it's **FIVE WHOLE STARS AND I AM FLAILING LIKE A DERANGED GRAPE**. It was *amazing* (obviously) and suffocatingly marvellous. I actually forgot *time* as I was reading it. Yup. That is how sold I am.

But I need the sequel so so bad and daaaaang it WHY DO I START SERIES THAT AREN'T ALL OUT YET?!?! #bookwormproblems

I was also mildly worried about this book, when I started, because I didn't love Sarah Fine's *Of Metal* and

Wishes or Scan. I mean, meh? But The Impostor Queen was SO DIFFERENT and SO AMAZING and, gah.

**Okay, okay, I'M GONNA LIST REASONS WHY I LOVED IT SO MUCH:**

*(All my reviews are lists these days?? I'm not even sorry??)*

- **It is an epic fantasy of EPIC PROPORTIONS.** I usually find YA fantasies lacking in world building? buT NOPE. I loved the details of the world and how large it was and how *freaking awesome*.
- **It also has an intriguingly interesting magic system.** It does use elements? Which usually bore me because eeeeverybody does it. BUT THIS DOES IT DIFFERENTLY. You either have a little bit of ice or fire or both...and if you have both you can balance them and be *fabulous*. The queen (Valtia) is like THE most powerfully balanced wielder in the world. EXCEPT OF COURSE ELLI DOESN'T HAVE THE POWER. (That's in the blurb, so not a spoiler.) Aka, she's the "Impostor" because she has exactly zero magic.
- Also I liked the twist on the "**chosen one**". Elli still sort of IS? But not in the way everyone thinks.
- **Elli, herself, I admit wasn't the best.** She was strong and brave and honourable and hard working and relatable -- YES. But she didn't particularly stand out to me? (I think I just like sassy characters too much and she wasn't???)
- **ALSO I FREAKING LOVE QUEEN BOOKS.** I wanna be queen. So that's probably why. (Although not a Valtia. They like DIE YOUNG because of all the magic they have to do.)
- **And the actual story line?!? NEVER BORED. NEVER.** It's slowish at the beginning but so so interesting. And omg it has *wicked end-of-chapter-cliff-hangers*. I seriously spent half my time going "I'm stopping after this chapter"...only to read like half the ENTIRE BOOK because I could stop. *Couldn't stop I tell you*. It has survivals and torture and ceremonies and running and freezing and wars and rebels and bandit caves and gahhhh SO MUCH STUFF OF AWESOME.
- Okay, so I admit this is slightly weird...**But at times I felt it was like Disney's Frozen, remade violent and YA??!** I mean, that IS weird right?! But in a totally good way, I PROMISE. They wield ice and there have this horrifically dangerous winter and they can't always control their magic. JUST LIKE ELSA. <3 Ahem. Also the names and things all felt rather Slavic...which I liked.
- **A quick note on the names?** Okay at the beginning I was like "Wahhhh WHAT EVEN" because they're all quite weird. But still edible. There are different words for the queen (Valtia) and then the people are call the Kapari, and the enemy is the Soturi. I *think* I've got all that right. **And then the characters are named stuff like:** Elli, Oskar, Sig, Freya, Maarika, Tuuli, Aira, Raimo, Kukka, Senja. But I handled it.
- **And a moment for the adorableness that is OSKARRRRRR.** Okay Oskar is like a moody bear, but he's so *kind* and sweet and TRAGIC. Yes, he has a tragic backstory. And he cares for his mother and sister like nothing else. AND HE'S SO AFJDKALFSD ADORABLE. **His and Elli's romance is slow and complex and never over powers the actual story.** Like they're both actually focused on FIGHTING first? Kissing second?
- Which actually leads me, though, to the **only part I'm still confused about.** It kind of indicates that Elli liked her maid Mim...more? Like...gawsh, it was random and it didn't FIT and I was confused. Like maybe Elli is bisexual? I've seen other people mention it. But it *didn't work for me* because she held Mim's hand and said she loved Mim but it never felt more than friendship love to me. SO IDEK. Elli and Oskar's romance

was so firmly wonderful I'm just shipping that with no worries.

- **DID I MENTION SIG THE DARLING YET?!?** Okay Sig is *not* a darling. He is like a raging inferno that likes to bust into flames. Temper temper. Obviously he has tons of fiery magic and he and Elli clash because he clashes with Oskar. But he and Oskar grew up together?? **LIKE I WANT A BOOK ON THEIR BACKSTORY YES PLEASE AND THANK YOU.** I loved Sig because **he was hot-tempered, tortured, and passionate.** And (view spoiler) I endlessly love Sig, okay?! Okay.
- Omg, I'm exhausting myself with all this intense fangirling.
- I'm actually exhausted because **I LOVE THE BOOK SO MUCH.** (Epic fantasy is like MA THING and so when it is *super good* it just makes my day.)
- **So basically this book is excellent.** It's well written, it's exciting, it's *unique* and it takes things one sees *all the time* in epic fantasy and just makes it **NEW AND DIFFERENT.** The cast is amazing. Like **ALL** the characters are fleshed out and complex?!? There are plot twists galore and freaktastic descriptions you can't look away from. **TORTURE AND BLEEDING.** And also **MAGIC AND MAYHEM.** It is definitely **one of my favourite reads of 2016.**
- This book, dudes. **THIS BOOK.**

\*collapses because loves it so much\*

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### **Cait • A Page with a View says**

I WAS NOT EXPECTING TO LOVE THIS UNEXPECTED LITTLE GEM SO MUCH woah.

It kind of reminded me of an awesome mix of The Heart of Betrayal meets Ruin & Rising with the way people do magic (and the whole community in a cave thing), but there were so many twists and a steady buildup of new information that nothing ever got slow or old. I liked how the religion was a bit darker & creepier... the whole tone of the story was really cool and the worldbuilding was great! And "Chosen One" thing is not what you think so keep reading -- there's a huge plot twist and it turned out to be way different than I thought!

I'm not sure what to say that wouldn't spoil anything... the main character Elli is chosen as the successor in a religion I don't feel like trying to summarize but basically there's a giant plot twist and she has to flee the temple and go live in a cave with these outcasts who are awesome. If you like a lot of the popular YA fantasy stories, you'll probably have fun with this one too. Plus it was such a nice change to see a bisexual main character in a normal plot that doesn't turn her sexuality into her identity or storyline. It's like just another character trait and she gets a full story.

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### **Viktoria Winter says**

I was sent an ARC of *The Impostor Queen* by McElderry publishing. This in no way effected my opinion of

the book or this review.

***"You could be either their most powerful asset? or their worst enemy."***

Elli was chosen by the Elders of Kupari to become the next Valtia, the queen who wields both ice and fire magic. All her life she was raised to rule, but when the time comes to ascend her throne...the magic doesn't present itself. It's simply gone where before it never was. Disgraced, Elli puts herself through a series of harrowing trials in hope of extracting the magic within her through agonizing tasks. When nothing works, she is left to face the brutal truth. Elli is barren of magic. Realizing this, the priests decide to take drastic measures. Mim, Elli's beloved handmaiden, overhears the Elder's plans, and rushes to inform the Valtia that she needs to flee or face sudden death. But Elli isn't fit for civilization outside the palace walls, and she is quickly banished to the Outlands after being dubbed a thief. While there, she uncovers devastating news about the Kupari people and who truly rules them. Torn between two worlds, Elli must lead the banished into a revolution while keeping her mislead people safe from the corruption of their Elders. As war looms off the coast of the Motherlake, and inner turmoil threatens to destroy the city she loves, Elli must choose a side before her kingdom and all it's magic are reduced to ashes.

Where to even begin? This book was fast paced and kept me entertained from start to finish. The prologue was dark and manipulatively tantalizing, instantly catching my attention. At times, however, I found the writing to be a bit bland. There was so many directions it could have been taken, but Fine left it to-the-point and firmly dedicated to telling the plot. I wasn't too upset by this because the plot, as you might have gathered by now, was INCREDIBLE. Elli and her companion of misfits made up for the lack of heavily poetic-induced literature (which I guess wouldn't bother some people, but I happen to prefer my stories a bit lyrical...oh well, sue me).

One of the best things by far was the characters. Elli isn't only the powerless Valtia to a people of the brink of war, but she's also a bisexual warrior with a will of steel. Yes, you read that right! *Elli is bisexual*. This unexpected tidbit of information made me like this book even more, especially because I myself am bisexual and I'm certainly not used to reading about characters who share my identity. Diversity is always welcome in the YA community. We need it. Fine delivered, but if I'm being painfully honest...I just wish she delved into this subject more. It was mentioned in the beginning, touched upon in the middle, but then Elli became enraptured by a boy in the Outlands and her love for her handmaiden, Mim, becomes secondary to her instant-adoration for Oskar. Maybe I'm just bitter, but I felt like a child who smelled cookies from far away and was denied that sugary goodness.

*I am so lost and desperate for comfort that I almost ask her to lie next to me, to allow me to press my face to her neck and coil my arms around her. But I remember that moment on the balcony earlier, when I realized she only remained close because I commanded it. So I shut my eyes as she withdrew, readying myself for what comes next.*

The concept of this book was intriguing because it focused on the main protagonist's "fatal flaw" and how she goes through a metamorphoses and tames that weakness into a power of its own making. Elli is strong in her own right, and that made me very happy. She doesn't need to have a special ability to be able to siege a kingdom. And boy, did she persevere. However, I feel it necessary to add that I also wanted Elli to have a stronger voice. She had the potential as well as the perfect build up, but she was constantly being used by people and often times allowing them to use her.

Elli, c'mon girl. Enough is enough.

The ending left me a little baffled because it didn't feel like a commencement. Rather, it felt more like a preview to the sequel where all the unanswered questions in this book will remain unanswered because there's just so much freaking going on. The action was intense, and the descriptions of fire wielders going against their counterparts ice were oh so very vivid and delicious (aka "brain candy"). One scene in particular includes a naked Elli storming through the White Plaza on the warpath to save her Saadella. It gave me chills. That was unquestionably my favorite scene in the entire book because it truly showed how far the character had come from being unfamiliar with walking on her own two feet to feeling confident without clothing in a crowd bristling with enemy forces. I may have been squealing.

So the question is...did I thoroughly enjoy this book? Would I recommend it? What about reading the sequel? The answer to all those questions...is yes. Although making me want to tear my hair out at times, *The Impostor Queen* is a story of finding oneself when no one else has faith in you. It was raw and daring and it left me breathless in moments. I will be reading the sequel once it comes out, and I recommend anyone who is a fan of fantasy and romance to check out this debut!

Honestly, I'm giving it 3.5/5 stars, but I have to round up. Also, that cover can be counted as the extra .5 because it SLAYS.

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### **Sophie says**

I've never read anything by Sarah before (though I do have a copy of *Of Metal and Wishes*), and after seeing all the glowing reviews for *The Impostor Queen*, I decided to treat myself after Christmas and buy a copy. It was wonderful to read to relax in between a mass of revision for my university exams.

*The Impostor Queen* is about Elli, who is heir apparent to the throne of Kupari. She is preparing to learn under her queen, the Valtia, the art of magic, to protect her home from the ravages of dreadful winters, and from impending invasions. Unfortunately, her mentor dies unexpectedly, and she's expected to ascend to the throne. The magic of the Valtia should be flowing through her veins from the moment her predecessor died, but it's not manifesting. She's faced with the realisation that she could be the downfall of the Kupari nation, and so are the Elders.

When it becomes evident that they are planning on killing her, in the hopes that a new Valtia will manifest, with powers, she escapes and is found by an exile. At first, she is basically useless - having had no skills at all, due to her upbringing intending for her to be a puppet queen. Over time, Elli grows into a truly fantastic character, losing all of her naivete, and realising her destiny may not be to be queen, but she can still exact change as she is.

The world building of this book is one of the best I've ever seen. Fine has constructed an amazing fantasy world, full of intrigue, and deception, with a bit of magic thrown in. It wasn't overly complicated in the geography, like many a fantasy novel I've read in the past - the map was just a nice addition, not something necessary to understand how the book worked.

There was a nice bit of romance, and it didn't feel forced or out of nowhere. I liked the smooth progression to friendship, and then to love. Oskar and Elli and a rough beginning, and were hit from angst at different intervals, but the way they were left at the end was just what I wanted. I'm really looking forward to seeing how they are in book 2!

*The Impostor Queen* was a perfect fantasy novel. Not too similar to any others, and had a nice pacing to the plot. Fine's writing was spectacular, and I'll definitely be picking up *Of Metal and Wishes* when I have a gap in my TBR. If fantasy books are your kind of thing, and you haven't picked up this book, I'd definitely recommend you get a copy when you can!

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## **Fafa's Book Corner says**

Review posted on Fafa's Book Corner !

Beware spoilers ahead!

This book was recommended to me by my GR friend Alyssa! Out of all the anticipated January releases this book (based on the synopsis) sounded the best in my opinion. I had come across this book through Alyssa. When she added it I was instantly drawn by her excitement and the title of the book. By the time I was done reading the synopsis chills went down my back. Of course I added it that day. Then as time went by I realized that I wasn't excited for it anymore. I thought I lost interest and took it off my shelf. But I still went back to this book. Whenever I saw a giveaway featuring *Passenger*, *Truthwitch*, and *The Impostor Queen*, I would enter in hopes of winning *The Impostor Queen*. It was then that I realized that I was still interested in this book and bought it. I am happy to say that I thoroughly enjoyed reading it!

The book begins with prologue written in third person. In the point of view of the former Valtia. The Valtia is dying. She didn't use her powers properly (there has to be a balance of ice and fire) and it has affected her body. She really does not want to die. She still has so much more to do as a Queen. But alas her time has come. Before she dies she sees a little girl with copper hair and pale blue eyes. And she knows what that little girl's destiny will be.

We are then taken to Elli who is having a lesson on the human body. You find out that Elli is excited to be the next Valtia. She's quite passionate about her role. She's also very curious so she tends to ask a lot of questions.

The next day is the harvest ceremony. During the ceremony the Valtia (the Queen) and her Saadela (Elli) will greet their people. Things have been a bit rough on the Valtia as they are being threatened with the possibility of war. Elli has been looking forward to the ceremony because she gets to see The Valtia and her people.

The ceremony is interrupted by some men claiming they saw enemy war ships. The Valtia leaves to fight them. She promises Elli that she will return for their dinner at night. Elli spends the remainder of the day panicking and pacing back and forth. Her handmaiden Mim comforts her as best as she can. Before their dinner Elli gets word through Mim that the Valtia has returned but this will be her last night.

Elli demands to be taken to the Valtia so she can see her for the last time. The Valtia is a mess. Some parts of her body are on fire while others are frozen. Regardless Elli remains with her until her last moments.

The Elders explain Elli that once the magic enters her body she has to be willing to use it and become a Valtia. Their words don't sink in at first because she is consumed by her grief for Sophia (the Valtia). After listening to the Elders Elli allows the magic to enter her.

Once the magic has entered her body the Elders make her swear to be a Valtia. She does so and is meet with cheers. Elder Kauko asks her to demonstrate her power by lighting a candle. She concentrates on the task but finds herself unable to do so. Elder Kauko assumes that this is because she has to rest. And that tomorrow she should be able to perform her magic. Elli agrees seeing no other reason.

Elder Kauko tells Elli that apart of having the magic she will experience terrible dreams. Mim has been instructed to stay with Elli and keep an eye on her. Despite what the Elders told her she has no dreams at night.

I honestly did not think this book would be so good! I'm surprised that I have never heard of this author until the end of last year. I loved the world! It was so interesting to read about the ice and fire magic as well as the way Elli has been raised.

Unlike most fantasy books Elli's destiny was revealed in this book. I assumed that it would buildup over the course of this series. But the author surprised me by revealing it in a first book. And the best part was that it all made sense! It didn't read like something the author came up with in the last minute. This was a very well planned book.

I loved Elli! She is so unique and unlike a lot of YA heroines. She was so compassionate about being Valtia and helping her people. She learned as much as she could so that she would be a good Valtia. After finding out that she's not the Valtia her world was turned upside down. She didn't know who she was and what she is meant to do with her life. But she didn't let that stop her. When she is rescued by Oskar she decides to learn about survival and doing tasks on her own. With the way Elli was raised she couldn't even put on her clothes, walk for too long, and etc. She was determined to learn to do all of these things and she did so. It was really impressive.

Oskar was so sweet! I loved his sister and mother. He is also different from most YA heroes. While he did keep secrets he wasn't rude. He was actually quite sweet. And really happy. I loved reading about his interactions with Elli! His mother and sister were nice when they took Elli in. By the end of the book they consider Elli family. Which was absolutely adorable!

I liked how this book was about finding yourself and choices. It was cool that the author weaved those themes in. The revelation of Elli's destiny and how it was tied with a few characters was well done! I found that I could relate to all the characters in a way. Especially Elli. I know what it's like to have your world turned upside down and I simply adored how she handled everything!

When I started reading this book I didn't like the writing style. As the book progressed I found myself enjoying it and found that I got used to the writing style. While I definitely loved the plot of the series I did not love this book. Hence the rating.

Overall this was a really good book! I recommend it to fantasy fans, the authors fans, and anyone looking to start a unique series.

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