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The crown prince of Pithdai has been kidnapped, and the ransom is a trove of magical paintings — any one of which could destroy the fragile political and cultural balance of the nascent Flecterran Union.

Luckily, the king's daughter, Arrina, leads the indefatigable Senserte — the Eyes of Justice, who are traveling players by day and ruthless crime-fighters by night.

The Senserte must orchestrate a plan to make the dangerous exchange to save the prince and bring the kidnappers to justice. But it's hard to plan for everything. Territorial air elementals, voracious lake monsters, and a rainforest of living nightmares are all in a day's work, but this caper has a catch: Arrina's brother might not want to be rescued.

The Pithdai Gate Details

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From Reader Review The Pithdai Gate for online ebook

A.R. Cook says

One of the trickiest things about writing a fantasy story set in a fabricated fictional world is balancing the description the world and its residents, while keeping a brisk pace/not bogging down the story with exposition.

The authors do a great job with their description of the various kingdoms and the characters, and you can tell they have wonderful imaginations. There is a huge cast of characters here (which a glossary of characters might have helped in remembering who is who, especially for readers who aren't used to this kind of epic fantasy) and a wide range of landscapes, each with distinctive themes.

There are also nice components here for a fun, adventurous story. These components, unfortunately, suffer from the vast amounts of exposition, verbal illustration, and constant cutting to-and-fro between intertwining subplots needed to even understand what is going on.

There are so many characters, as well, it is hard to get a sense of the depth of relationships between them. It is more meaningful to focus on 2 to 3 characters and get a solid grasp on their relationships than 20 or more who only get sparse amounts of "page time."

Even at 400 pages, there was a lot crammed into this book, and it felt like there could have been some trimming and a narrower focus on the plot--maybe save some of the subplots for a sequel or their own separate novel. But it was enjoyable overall, and I could sense the authors had a fun time writing it, so I hope they continue their literary partnership.

Nancy says

I was fortunate enough to win this book through GoodReads First Reads giveaways for an honest review.

Within the first few pages of this book I knew I was in trouble. The main character Arinna, head of the Senserte (a group of individuals dedicated to righting the wrongs committed against the common man) proceeds to introduce a multitude of characters she is working with. You then learn there are more characters involved in this troupe. Top it off with the different types of races and you have one massive confusing story.

Overall the plot was good. There was a constant flow of action with not too much down time however the final scene was totally baffling. I feel the authors tried too hard to make the book an adventurous escapade. Aside from the potential good plot I also did like how the authors portrayed the Senserte as vulnerable and fallible. Not all of their schemes took off.

I felt the writing was rushed and convoluted. There was a good story hidden under layers of confounding prose. Peel away the layers and you would have had a great adventure.

Michelle says

Wow. I haven't enjoyed a tale of this nature so much since my amazing Dungeon-Master older brother led us on D&D adventures decades ago! This intricate story is so captivating with such vivid, detailed characters I had to force myself to put the book down. The map was quite helpful, as the world created here is

reminiscent of Tolkien in depth and dimension. The collaborative effort by the authors seems to have transcended either individual, resulting in the product becoming greater than the mere sum of its parts. This is truly a tale of epic nature, and I look forward eagerly to future works by these authors.

I won this book from a FirstReads Giveaway on GoodReads

Lise says

I received a free copy of this book from the Goodreads First Reads program.

First and foremost, the authors create a rich, compelling fantasy world. The weakest part of the book is the way they push the reader into it with a 'sink or swim' attitude. There is a little exposition later on (some of the characters are young and inexperienced), but even so, there is so much complexity to the world that it's hard to keep everything, and everyone, straight.

There are at least five races in the world, each of which has a completely different flavor of magic (many have several flavors). There are many nations, each of which has its own culture and racial makeup. Mixed race characters have yet another flavor of magic, and there is a history of racial oppression resolved by the creation of one or more nations and the recognition of one particular hybrid race being recognized as its own people.

Perhaps the most compelling part of the book is the elven (or elf like) race, who lose magical ability as they mature. How this affects their culture and family structure is touched upon (if not deeply explored) and it is fascinating.

There are fifteen members of the Senserte, which come from different countries and races and each with his or her own personal history. At some point the reader just has to stop trying to keep track, and just go along for the ride.

Which works out very well, because, along with being a fantasy novel, this is also a caper story, and part of the charm is to let yourself be surprised. Impressively, the authors touch upon all of the key elements well before they come up in the resolution, so it's possible to follow along with, if not anticipate, the eventual resolution.

I hope there are more books in the series, not just because I enjoyed this one, but because I feel that I invested so much in understanding the world it would be a waste to let go of that too soon.

Allana Kellett says

I won this book on goodreads giveaway, and I am so thankful I did. I LOVED this book, and could easily see it being made into a movie. The author really makes you feel each character. Absolutely recommend you read this book.
