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Sunbolt (The Sunbolt Chronicles Book 1)



Synopsis

The winding streets and narrow alleys of Karolene hide many secrets, and Hitomi is one of them. Orphaned at a young age, Hitomi has learned to hide her magical aptitude and who her parents really were. Most of all, she must conceal her role in the Shadow League, an underground movement working to undermine the powerful and corrupt Arch Mage Wilhelm Blackflame. When the League gets word that Blackflame intends to detain and execute a leading political family, Hitomi volunteers to help the family escape. But there are more secrets at play than Hitomi's, and much worse fates than execution. When Hitomi finds herself captured along with her charges, it will take everything she can summon to escape with her life.

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Customer Reviews

So I went out and bought Intisar Khanani's second book right after finishing "Thorn." I read it over Spring Break, and it was totally worth it! Seriously, you guys, I LOVED the main character Hitomi in Sunbolt more than I've loved an MC in a long time. She was super scrappy, vulnerable, clever, big-hearted, and streetwise while maintaining an endearing innocence at the same time. So,

Khanani's world building and magic systems are some of the most intriguing I've had the pleasure of coming across. She has such a unique perspective as a storyteller, and her writing . . . it is just . . . solid. Really, and the voice of her protagonist is so likable and logical. The things Hitomi does just make sense for her character. I know that sounds weird, but one of the biggest things that bother me about books is when the characters aren't true to who they are. Now, just a head's up, "Sunbolt" is the first book in a series and more the length of a novella. I didn't realize that, so when it ended much sooner than I expected, I was like "What!? NOOOOOO!!!!" This wasn't because the story wasn't satisfying in the length that it was, but because it was so compelling. I loved the Ghost, the Shadow League, Val, and Kenta. The first half of the book had a very "The Scarlet Pimpernel" meets "Arabian Nights" feel to it. And I loved the way Khanani took common myth and made it her own to fit surprisingly well in her world. Another amazing thing Intisar Khanani has going for her--and this was the same with "Thorn"--is that from the very first page, she's able to take hold of me, and her story doesn't let me go until it's over.

I was gripped from the start and found this story to be a very different take on what is actually a kind of vampire fantasy, a genre I actually have little interest in, so to please me it had to go some!! I loved the high-octane opening scene - it introduced great tension at the very start. I liked Hitomi herself, her great courage, her compassion shown by how she paid for the damaged horse, wanted to help others in need, even when they were a great danger to her and how this tendency proved her salvation in impossible situations. I loved how the author SHOWED the qualities of the characters instead of TELLING us about them. I enjoyed the slow build-up of some kind of chemistry between the fearful and unlikely Val and Hitomi. I liked the way the magic was handled, showing it coming at a cost to the one who wields it and also the cunningly slow reveal of the level of the magical powers held by Hitomi. The scene with Val in the tower had a weirdness to it that was truly fascinating, the calling of the bird, the release of the soul from entrapment in the blood spell and the horror of Val himself. I loved the turn of phrase in places, such as when Hitomi says of her mother, "Four years I've thought her dead, scrabbling to find my next meal and keep a roof over my head, while she has dressed in silk and wandered sunlit gardens." Conveys so much grief, rejection and sorrow in so few words. Compared to the more well-known vampire fantasies (and they are usually lesser in quality than this one,) there was a refreshing difference in tone that felt almost like a cultural difference and it was partly explained when I realized the author's own cultural background may be very different from most others of this genre I have read.

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