



Uprooted

Naomi Novik

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“Our Dragon doesn’t eat the girls he takes, no matter what stories they tell outside our valley. We hear them sometimes, from travelers passing through. They talk as though we were doing human sacrifice, and he were a real dragon. Of course that’s not true: he may be a wizard and immortal, but he’s still a man, and our fathers would band together and kill him if he wanted to eat one of us every ten years. He protects us against the Wood, and we’re grateful, but not that grateful.”

Agnieszka loves her valley home, her quiet village, the forests and the bright shining river. But the corrupted Wood stands on the border, full of malevolent power, and its shadow lies over her life.

Her people rely on the cold, driven wizard known only as the Dragon to keep its powers at bay. But he demands a terrible price for his help: one young woman handed over to serve him for ten years, a fate almost as terrible as falling to the Wood.

The next choosing is fast approaching, and Agnieszka is afraid. She knows—*everyone* knows—that the Dragon will take Kasia: beautiful, graceful, brave Kasia, all the things Agnieszka isn’t, and her dearest friend in the world. And there is no way to save her.

But Agnieszka fears the wrong things. For when the Dragon comes, it is not Kasia he will choose.

Uprooted Details

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From Reader Review Uprooted for online ebook

Khanh, first of her name, mother of bunnies says

OH MY GOD A DRAGON. A TERRIBLE DRAGON WHO KIDNAPS A VILLAGE'S BEAUTIFUL YOUNG GIRLS. DO THEY GET EATEN?! DO THEY GET TORTURED?!!! WHAT IS THEIR TERRIBLE FATE?!

"They forget how to live here...[they] remember to be afraid," my father said. That was all.

Then they took their dowry-silver and left. Mostly they would go to Kralia and go to the University. Often as not they married some city man, and otherwise they became scholars or shopkeepers.

Are you fucking kidding me? *seethes*

I swear to god I'm the only one in the world who didn't think this book is THE BESTEST MOST SPECIALEST WONDERFULEST BOOK EVER. For god's sake, Emily May loved it, and I highly respect her opinion, but this book is one case where we will have to agree to disagree.

Frankly, I have no idea why everyone loved this book and thought it was so wonderful. The main character is every bit of a **Speshul Snowflake** Mary Sue. The "Dragon" (so very disappointing) is an asshole of the *Fever* sort, the kind I deem **Jericho-Fucking-Barrons**, a term used to describe an asshole who is an asshole only for the sake of being an asshole. He's grumpy, he's grouchy, he is a huge fucking condescending thundercunt of a douchebag just for the plain old reason that he wants to be one.

He was irritated with me every time I came into his library, even on the few days that I managed to keep myself in good order: as though I were coming to annoy and interrupt him, instead of him tormenting and using me. And when he had finished working his magic through me and left me crumpled on the floor, he would scowl down at me and call me useless.

Let's get one thing straight. I like assholes (sometimes), but they have to have *character*. For example, Dr. House. He is filled with snark. He is a jerk. He's oftentimes despicable, but there's a spark in him, a humanity in him that lets me love him and appreciate him no matter what despicable things that comes out of his mouth, because, under it all (and you seriously have to look deep), he is a human being with a good purpose, no matter how harsh his methods.

Once again, I like assholes. I like anti-heroes, but they have to self-redeeming. The "Dragon" in this book is none such.

Ok, back to the plot. It sucked. I didn't really read the synopsis, but I know there was a dragon who kidnapped girls in it. Surely a terrible fate, right?! EEEEEEEEEEHHHN. Wrong. Look at the quote at the beginning of my review. Essentially the girls are "kidnapped" by said "Dragon" (keep in mind I used quotation marks around dragon), they're educated, they become well-read, and they want to spread their wings. They're given shit tons of money to make a better life for themselves.

Terrifying. Absolutely fucking terrifying. I'm quivering in my boots.

The world building is your standard generic fantasy fare. Monsters. Kings. Princes. But the magic. The

fucking magic, man. It just highlights what a special freaking snowflake the main character is. There is nothing to catch the imagination. If I shouted out "*Merde!!!!*" and butterflies burst into the air and a rainbow forms at my feet, it would essentially be as magical as the shit in this book.

I whispered, "Kalikual."

The power rushed out of me.

Foreign words!!!! So magical!!!one!1

The main character, Agnieszka, is seriously nothing new. You have read countless incarnations of her in every shitty YA book ever written because **she's a special, special girl who doesn't know how special she is.** She's just so ordinary and adorably clumsy and plain, y'all! The Dragon always, always takes the most special girl!

The Dragon didn't always take the prettiest girl, but he always took the most special one, somehow.

:| <- this is my surprised face.

And Ag-noying (my new name for her) is just so...so...ordinary!

At seventeen I was still a too-skinny colt of a girl with big feet and tangled dirt-brown hair, and my only gift, if you could call it that, was I would tear or stain or lose anything put on me between the hours of one day.

You don't say!

But of course, there's more to Ag-noying than meets the eye, why, **she's got magical power that's just waiting to burst from her like a rose from a fermenting pile of steaming poop.**

My strength welled up through my body and fountained out of my mouth, and where it left me, a trembling in the air began and went curling down around my body in a spiraling path.

Yeah, yeah. I've read this shit before, and I say no, thank you. I like my main characters average, thank you very much. I like my "Dragons" with humanity.

1 star is a bit harsh, but for all the hype, this book let me down tremendously.

Katerina says

When it comes to rating books like *Uprooted*, I keep wishing I could give more than 5 stars. Because honestly, **5 stars are not enough.**

Beautiful. That's the word I've been searching for. *Uprooted* is a ***beautiful*** book. Naomi Novik narrates the story of young Agnieszka, a constantly unkempt girl who to everyone's astonishment was chosen to live in the dreadful wizard's tower for 10 years as the price for his assistance against the evil Wood. Agnieszka imagined how desperate and empty her life was going to be, locked away from her family and her dear friend

with the Dragon as her only company. What she would never imagine was that everything she thought of him was a lie based on fear and prejudice. That magic flew in her veins. That she would play a vital part in the kingdom's politics, that she would participate in the never ending war not only against their neighbors but also against the ancient Wood. The Wood that was calling for her. After all, she was just the woodcutter's daughter. With an unequaled gift for disaster.

It sounds like a fairytale, doesn't it? With the **witches** and the **haunted forest** and the **knights** and the **brave girl** who is about to find out her destiny is a great one and will affect thousands of people? It seems so at first, partly because of Naomi Novik's **spectacular writing**. The world she created is so **vivid and enchanting**, you can smell the pines and feel the mud under your bare feet and the air crackling with magic, your stomach clenched with agony and fear, your heart hammering in your chest, and it takes tremendous effort to realize that you are not the one fighting the corruption in Polnya, you are just the reader, in the safety of your house, drinking your chocolate. And you couldn't be more disappointed.

But there was **darkness** in *Uprooted* that you don't encounter in most of the fairytales. There were brutal murders, desperation, hatred and rage, and the good guys didn't always win. There wasn't a Prince Charming, only a grumpy, sassy wizard who was irritated most of the times and he couldn't remember what being a human felt like. Thousands were slaughtered due to one man's certainty and ambition. And the wizards weren't good or evil, just opportunists, devoid of love. And Agnieszka? A flawed, stubborn girl with a good heart and iron will, unable to hate even her worst enemies, a dedicated friend and daughter, and a different kind of hope.

Well that does sound like a fairytale after all.

Emily May says

Hey! You there! Please listen. On May 19th this book will be released - on that day go to this page or this page or another retailer of your choice and download the free sample of this book. If, by the end of that small sample, you are not convinced that this book is amazing, never think of it again. BUT, I sincerely doubt that will be the case.

Because it took me **ONE CHAPTER** - well, a few pages really - to make me realize that this book was going to steal every bit of my spare time until I'd devoured it all. And it did. It was magical, surprising, incredibly well-written, and so very funny. And not funny in a Terry Pratchett comedy/fantasy kind of way, but just funny because these characters are so real and charming.

There are those well-drawn, vivid books that have great world-building, beautiful descriptions without being overly descriptive, and get lauded by critics. Then there are those books that are delicious chocolate-ice-cream-with-sprinkles pieces of entertainment that drag you in and just provide so much enjoyment. *Uprooted* is a rare beast - because it's both.

It's just so goddamn *charming*. It's exciting and creepy with regards to the plot and world, but it's made especially wonderful because of the character dynamics. Agnieszka and the Dragon are hilarious together - they operate with a kind of love/hate dynamic that makes for some really funny scenes and some heart-warming ones.

What a magical, though strangely honest and thoughtful book. I'm avoiding saying too much about the story because the blurb is deliberately vague for a reason, but I will give you a little something. *Uprooted* opens in a village where once every ten years, the Dragon (actually a man and wizard who rules over the land) comes and picks a seventeen year-old girl from the village and takes her to his palace. Nobody knows what happens to them, but they are not seen for the next ten years and they always come back changed.

It made me smile because it sounds a little like the premise for *Cruel Beauty* (which I loved) and *A Court of Thorns and Roses* (which I didn't love), but it's better and different than either of those. There's a touch of the romantic (and the heart-poundingly sexy), but Novik is both a tease and someone not concerned about being PG - which made the book infinitely better on that front than either of the other two mentioned.

Also, one of my favourite things was the creepy Wood - a literally evil forest that is alive with a dark corruption that will claim you if you ever enter it, or get touched by one of the monstrous beings that come out of the Wood. How weird and creative and scary... I LOVED it.

No one went into the Wood and came out again, at least not whole and themselves. Sometimes they came out blind and screaming, sometimes they came out twisted and so misshapen they couldn't be recognized; and worst of all sometimes they came out with their own faces but murder behind them, something gone dreadfully wrong within.

I can't praise this book highly enough. I'm desperately trying to string together the right combination of words to make other people pick this up. I just hope I've been successful, because it was truly a magical, entertaining experience.

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Petrik says

Buddy read with Fantasy Buddy Reads

My first review in 2017 and it started with a new milestone, **my first ever 1 star rating. I wish I could give this a negative star as right now, this is literally the worst book I ever read in my entire life.** You could see my other reviews and you'll see I'm quite generous with my ratings but giving this book even a 2 star are way too generous for me. Look, this will be an extremely unpopular opinion, I hated this book and I'm disgusted with almost everything in it. I never understood the concept of DNF until now since I always thought "Why? *Shouldn't we read any book until the end to give our final judgment?*" but oh boy I learned a hard lesson with this. I should've DNF this book around page 100 and it will save me from going through so much pain and I meant that literally, I feel sick, my eyes hurt, and I feel like vomiting every time I picked up this book. So a warning if you loved this book, that's good I'm happy for you, I wish I could do the same but no, **I hate it, I hate it, wait let me repeat that once again I HATE IT!** If you're going to feel offended please don't read my review, seriously stay away.

Oh wait let me start with the positive parts first: the book cover and the writing is beautiful plus I don't think I'll ever find another book I despise more than this so that's a yeay. Okay done, let's get back on track.

The main characters and their romance are one of the worst problem in this book next to its pacing. Kasia, the side character would've been a much better choice for a protagonist by far compared to Agnieszka imo

(I'll dubbed her Agony since it's much easier to type and describe my feeling), Agony is too much of a Mary Sue and full of Special Snowflake Syndrome while the asshole "Dragon" or Skunk, Skank, whatever the hell his real name is are a complete asshole just for the sake of being one. There's no development for them since the beginning until the end, the flatness of their characters are even worse than a skateboard. The first time they made an appearance, that's how they will be until the end except for Kasia.

Seriously though, did ANYONE actually liked what the Dragon does in this book? This book is catered towards YA and yet 95% of the time their relationship consisted of him mocking Agony by calling her slut, useless, idiot repeatedly throughout the whole book. The worst part out of all this? Agony ended up falling in love with him anyway. It's idiotic, all he does is oral abused her all the way I seriously thought I was reading 50 Shades of Grey in The Forest settings. The romance happened pointlessly, out of nowhere and there is no middle part. It's just the beginning of their relationship, mocked repeatedly and then boom (view spoiler). Seriously wth? I'm going to put some quotes now, enlighten me if this works in real life during dating cause I'm quite sure someone will hire an assassin to kill me if I said this.

"The dirtiest thing in this tower is you," he said - true but unkind anyway.

"I do recall the girl neither horse-faced nor a slovenly mess."

'He was irritated with me every time I came into his library, even on the few days that I managed to keep myself in good order: as though I were coming to annoy and interrupt him, instead of him tormenting and using me. And when he had finished working his magic through me and left me crumpled on the floor, he would scowl down at me and call me useless'

"You intolerable lunatic," he snarled at me, and then he caught my face between his hands and kissed me.

The writing in this book were actually beautiful, probably the only good thing about it but the pacing oh dear God save me. It's SUPER TEDIOUS, it's so full of unnecessary description, for example, there's not a single chapter where Agony doesn't talk about her skirt why? I mean seriously why? unless your skirt suddenly shoot a freaking rainbow stop talking about your skirt. This book could've been done within 200 pages and it would've been so much better. I have quite a severe insomnia for 10 years now and this book managed to send me to sleep 8 freaking times, literally sleep because it was so unbelievably boring.

Don't even get me started on how many times I have to reread a paragraph because I lost count on how many times my mind wandered while I'm reading this book. This situation almost never happened before, even on books I disliked I don't have many trouble finishing them. **I legit thought about the process on how to turn a raw potato into a French Fries out of nowhere while reading this and hey, turns out it's much more interesting than what the pacing and the plot this book put me through.**

Lastly, the magic system is uber ridiculous. There are no limitation or system to it, Agony could conjured

Geralt of Rivia, Gundam, Doraemon, a massive spaceship or Pitbull out of nowhere to save the day with her spell by saying something like “un dos tres cuatro” and it would still work. She’s a Mary Sue, there is no explanation to her magic, she only need to speak the words and she would be able to cast anything, like literally anything as long as she read about it before. I don’t feel any intensity from the action and battle scenes anymore because of this, plus the tedious pacing made me want to throw the book into a sewer ever since I hit the 100 pages mark. I pity the tree which were used to create this book.

I could ramble on for another 1000 words about why this book doesn’t work for me but I’m tired, I’m just so tired after reading this. **I don’t know if I’m in a reading slump right now but I’m sure as hell near one because of this book. I never thought any book could inflict me with so much suffering.** Once again, this is purely my opinion and review. A lot of people and my friends loved this book so it could still work out for you but if anyone asked me anything about recommending this or not, I will tell them to stay away as far as possible. This is now the worst book I ever read in my life and it will be my bench mark for the saying *“It can’t get any worse than this.”*

Lola says

I think this book was uprooted from Heaven’s grounds and magically brought to Earth.

Evelyn (devours and digests words) says

This book is underwhelming AS FUCK.

I'll probably be damned for saying this but screw sugar-coating. This book makes me so angry.

Uprooted is one of those books with a pretty outside look full of sweet promises. Yes, sweet and yet they're EMPTY promises. The book covers scream 'BUY ME NOW OR REGRET IT FOR ALL ETERNITY' and the synopsis is so vague to the point of mystery. It lead me in to having such sky high expectations only later that I have those expectations thrown back into my fucking face.

The beginning of the story started out really nicely in a whimsical fairytale sort of way. I thought this will be the next best thing to add into my Favourites shelf. But by the time I reached past 5 - 8% I had already lose my interest and started to wish that I had never, ever bothered with this.

How I pretty much sum up the book:

ONE STAR to character developments. I cannot stand any of them. Nearly all of them are as flat as a cardboard cutout. None experienced huge break throughs and if they did, it did not show in the book. The characters are none I can connect with and none I could care less about.

My biggest pet peeves is that **Agnieszka suffers a huge case of Special Snowflake Syndrome.** She's been picked by The Dragon (who isn't an actual dragon or even a shapeshifter, to my disappointment) out of the blue because she has magical powers. Oh and somehow out of other people, she can survive longer in the Woods.

"You've been inexpressibly lucky," he [The Dragon/Sarkan] said finally. "And inexpressibly mad, although in your case the two seem to be the same thing. **No one has gone into the Wood as deep as you and come out whole:** not since—" He halted, and I somehow knew without his saying her name that it was Jaga: that Jaga had walked in the Wood, and come out again.'

exasperated sigh

ONE STAR to the ridiculous magic system. Not only is it ridiculous but it is FLAWED. This is probably just my personal preference but Magic comes with a price and in this case, once you magick something it only drains you bit by bit. It's hardly any price to pay. Some of the characters in the book are sorcerers/witches and they cast spells to make magic. Magic spells with IMPOSSIBLE ways to pronounce.

"Zokinen valisu, akenezh hinisu, kozhonen valisu."

"Ulozishtussovjenta, megiotkozhor, ulozishtusmegiot,"

..... I dont know about you but that all goes 'agskdfsfslmvdgwddnlkgsljkl' in my head. I refuse to even read the spells properly. I legit have no idea just how Novik expected her readers to read that.

ONE STAR for the writing that is so messy, mediocre and tedious to read. Yes, tedious. It's all tilted to TELLING instead of SHOWING. I also have to endure paragraphs upon paragraphs of useless, unnecessary descriptions. I got so fucking bored I nearly fall dead asleep. There was nothing spectacular about the way Novik writes.

ONE STAR to the non-existent chemistry between the Dragon and Agnieszka. It was bullshit. **ZERO STAR to the love interest.** If there's one thing I really hate, it's romance revolving around verbal and physical abuses. I swear, verbal abusing Agnieszka is the only language the Dragon knows how to speak in.

First of all, he insulted her appearances.

"The dirtiest thing in this tower is you," he said - true but unkind anyway.

annnnnd another jab of insult...

"I do recall the girl neither horse-faced nor a slovenly mess."

Yes, he just described her as 'horse-faced' to which Agnieszka retorted....

"Then you needn't keep me!" I flared, **angry and wounded - *horse-faced* stung.**

Yet she still fucking fall for him anyway :-))

Oh wait, there's more. **The Dragon also insulted her by calling her an idiot every steps of the way.** About more than THREE times in the book.

More cases of abuse he showed the MC:

'He was irritated with me every time I came into his library, even on the few days that I managed to keep myself in good order: as though I were coming to annoy and interrupt him, instead of him tormenting and using me. **And when he had finished working his magic through me and left me crumpled on the floor, he would scowl down at me and call me useless'**

He insulted her plain ways of dressing and forced her to re-dress for HIM in fancy gowns by using magic (which wears out Agnieszka a lot). In the end, she had to crawl on her knees and hands. Yes, he made her CRAWL back up to her own tower, exhausted.

Why the fuck would you bother with the way she dressed up herself? *Sarkan, you motherfucking creep.*

He called her intolerable and crazy in one sentence and then he kissed her. This is only the first kiss.

"You intolerable lunatic," he snarled at me, and then he caught my face between his hands and kissed me.

AWWW. ISN'T THAT JUST SO SWEET, AND SO FUCKING ROMANTIC?!?!? WOW. I THINK I JUST DIED FROM SWOONING MY SOCKS OFF OVER THIS INSUFFERABLE JACKASS.

The sex scene between them both happened out of nowhere and it was sooooo fucking unnecessary. It was like the book decided to throw in a little spice to their almost non-existent relationship. I got so baffled that Agnieszka would throw away her maidenhood over Sarkan whose behaviour do not even fucking improve afterwards.

The fact that many gushed over The Dragon disturbed me. This dude is abusive. **ABUSE IS NOT ROMANTIC.** Verbal or physical otherwise. STOP THIS SHIT, AUTHORS. Place yourself in Agnieszka's shoes. Put more imaginations on how YOU would feel if you were being treated like all those ways I pointed out.

This one treatment to Agnieszka is particularly the most terrible Sarkan had pulled out of his sleeve.

'He was on me in an instant, thrusting me flat down against my pillows. "So," he said, silkily, his hand pressed down upon my collarbone, pinning me easily to the bed . . . I was terrified . . . He shoved me hard against the bed and bent low.

"Don't dare lie to me!" he hissed. "I will tear the truth out of your throat-" his fingers were resting on my neck; his leg was on the bed, between mine.'

How about you go fuck yourself, Sarkan?

Bookdragon Sean says

Have you ever loved the first half of a book but hated the second?

Well I have and it sucks. It leaves you feeling rather torn in a review. So, I'm going to tear my review in two and review the two halves separately. Here goes:

First Half- A lovely magical friendship- 4*

In the beginning I had a real reason to carry on reading. The character known as the Dragon was a complete enigma. Discovering what drove this lonely man was, essentially, the reason I carried on with the book. He's such a cool guy. Well at least by my standards. The man locks himself in his immense library and reads all day. Now isn't that just fun? I love reading about characters that read, and appreciate books in the same way that I do. I find them quite compelling. But, he is also terribly moody and dismissive to his young student Agnieszka. So I wanted to know what was giving this man a sore head.

Every ten years he recruits a new student from the local village. He usually picks the most attractive girl or her who is remarkable in some way. Ok, so that's a bit of a dickish move. He takes the woman home where she becomes his live-in-maid. Ok, so he's getting worse. See what I mean:

"His name tasted of fire and wings, of curling smoke, of subtlety and strength and the rasping whisper of scales. He eyed me and said stiffly, "Don't land yourself into a boiling-pot, and as difficult as you may find it, try and present a respectable appearance."

This year he fancies a change. He picks the most ordinary girl out of the lot; she appears to have nothing special about her. When he goes back to his wizard tower he leaves her to her own devices. And whoa! Would you guess it? She turns out to be a magic wielder too. She starts reading his books, very intimate I know, and discovers a strange affinity for the craft.

[^]This great pic summarises a lot. It's perfect.

This was my favourite part of the novel. The two characters discover their compatibility and worked together to create new and interesting magic's. But, the downside is that it was over far too quickly. This novel did not feel like a stand-alone fantasy. For me, it had the potential to be an epic fantasy series, with this being the

beginning. Instead it was over far too quickly as the recently acquainted characters were thrown into the action that became the second half.

Second half- Then everything turned upside down- 2*

The plot then took a weird direction. The world expanded far too quickly. The story went from being isolated to a tower to reaching across the entire lands, and even as far as to affect the random monarchy. The beginning was slow, perfectly so, then it rushed into world events and kingdoms and rulers all too quickly. I do like the idea behind this book, but there was no build up as the story expanded. The novel just had too much story for one book and it felt condensed as a result. This could have easily been split into two. Structurally, the author made a few mistakes in my estimation.

This book would have been far more effective had the friendship at the start been allowed more time to develop. It was thrown into the action that much, that when the romance came it made no sense. It didn't have time to work; it just sprung and left me feeling a little surprised. It was a case of where did that come from? I think there should have been much more time spent in the tower, as the rest of the world was slowly, and gradually, revealed. That way this could have easily ended at the midway point.

So let's talk about the woods. The woods are the antagonist in this story. It's a novel idea, one that made this feel like a dark fairy tale. I loved that; it worked. It more than worked it was rather brilliant. But it could have been better. I think a prelude demonstrating the dark nature of it would have helped to establish it as a real threat, rather than an irrational fear, very early on. Then there's how the wood ended. Now that was so very disappointing! It was too fast. One minute the wood is practically an invincible enemy, the next it's defeated in vague circumstances. It was just too fast to be effective!

>Final thoughts - So, I've criticised this a great deal. I did like the story, but for me it took a terrible wrong turn which severed my enjoyment. This could have been so much more; it was just over far too quickly. One book wasn't enough to tell this tale in. I think three stars is a fair rating, all things considered.

Chelsea Humphrey says

“Our Dragon doesn’t eat the girls he takes, no matter what stories they tell outside our valley. We hear them sometimes, from travelers passing through. They talk as though we were doing human sacrifice, and he were a real dragon. Of course that’s not true: he may be a wizard and immortal, but he’s still a man, and our fathers would band together and kill him if he wanted to eat one of us every ten years. He protects us against the Wood, and we’re grateful, but not that grateful.”

^Insert cliche quote above that every other reviewer before me has used.

Guys, I know I'm late to the party, but this book was so worthy of all the stars. I'm still goo-goo eyed at how beautiful and breathtaking the writing is; saying it is atmospheric and quirky and full of heart and soul doesn't even do it justice, but I'm not sure there are proper words in the english language to convey the feelings this book gave me. Right after I finished this one, Mr. Humphrey asked me what it was about and I stuttered and stumbled through some semblance of a description because HOW DO YOU DESCRIBE THIS BOOK? Everything I said made no sense, just as this review will likely make little to no sense, but I'll try my

best to convince you to give this one a try if you enjoy a fantasy that is equal parts tenderness and epic growth.

"I was a glaring blot on the perfection. But I didn't care: I didn't feel I owed him beauty."

So, since I apparently can't do plot descriptions an justice, I shall discuss some of the reasons I loved this book. *"These are a few of my favorite things!"* First, Agnieszka is such a worthy protagonist. She begins as a self-conscious, waif of a girl who's self-esteem is what we see of many girls today as teenagers, yet as soon as she's taken by the Dragon, we see the fight well up in her and sparks begin to fly. By the end of the novel, we have a leader in Agnieszka (SLAY GIRL SLAY) and she is everything I wanted her character to grow into and more. Her banter with the Dragon brings some of the heavier portions a levity that is needed to keep the story from getting too dark, and I love how creative this fantasy world is that Novik has created. It was crisp and clear in my mind; the descriptions are so vivid and cinematic that I could easily play this out as a movie in my mind rather than words on a page.

I could go on and on about this book, but I gather you've either a) already read this book and know all of this for yourself or b) you haven't read it yet and don't need me spoiling any of the fun for you. If you haven't read this yet but enjoy atmospheric fantasies full of complex relationships and satisfying world building, please do yourself and pick this one up. Thanks to everyone who recommended it to me and for my library for having a book I wanted to check out for once! :)

Melissa (Ever So Mela) says

It's nor here nor there. I'm going to steal a bit from Chester and say this is the epitome of Blur Rating.

Are you one of those readers who really gets fed up with series?

It's like every corner you turn, every book you read, you find out it's a trilogy. Or some kind of saga. I remember I used to whine and cry about this all the time because I don't know about you but if I read a book today you can sure bet your butt that I will not remember details about it in two months time *unless* it was utterly epic, and even then. And unlike most readers, I refuse to reread so I trudge on to the next book most of the time not knowing what the heck is happening until my memories resurface or a friend (usually Brit) so kindly refreshes my mind.

You may be asking yourself, why the heck is Melissa blabbering on about series and trilogies?

Well, because this book made me appreciate them. It dawned on me, that some plots just need to be turned into a saga because smashing them into a 400 page book is like forcing a size 9 foot into a 6 inch 7 1/2 size heel.

It's murder.

Cold blooded murder.

This novel is too dense. It's too layered and runs from one plot to another without giving us time to digest the previous one, making this one tough cookie to swallow. When it's not the overly descriptive surroundings, it's the tedious never ending rendition of magic, one that, by the way, still left a lot to be desired.

See, that is one thing I'm able to appreciate from the Throne of Glass series. I'm not its biggest fan (having actually only really enjoyed the second book) but I was able to enjoy how the plot thickens and gets layers added as the series progresses but if you try to do that in such a short novel, it just becomes hard to swallow and digest.

But at the same time, if it wasn't going to be written into a series, than this needed to be slimmed the heck down cause I just read 3 stories in one. I mean, I know this is only 440 pages or so and I've read longer books in one sitting but daaaamn at times this book read like a textbook.

And ain't nobody got time for that.

As for the writing

You know how some authors have a way of writing in a lyrical and slow paced manner but when you enter an action scene they have a way of making your heart pound and adrenaline sky rocket. That art of being able to make your breathe hold still and your anxiety hit the roof?

...This one doesn't.

A friend had previously warned me about the writing style but I did not heed caution cause in my mind *you don't have to be a poet to woo me*. But crap, you at least have to have some finesse.

As for the magic

Look, honestly I'm not one to fidget about this. I usually don't care and they don't necessarily have to have some kind of system or consequence theme going on but, honestly? This magic was weird as heck. There was times she used spells but most of her magic was some sort of weird ass humming. If she wanted a twig to turn into a tree she would go...

hmmmm...you are a tree, you have leaves. You grow branches...You are a tree...grow...grow...You are a tree and have leaves and branches...You are a tree...hmmm

Ok, so that may not be *an exact* rendition but that sure is as close to it as it comes.

As for the romance

Just no. I can honestly say this is one of the worst romances I've read in a book. You know when reviewers rant about the lack of chemistry between characters? Well my friends, here it wasn't even a lack of it, **it was a total absence!**

When I got to the scene where he kissed her I was just...

Where the heck did that come from?!?! The romance sucks and not just because of the absolute lack of chemistry but because he never backpedals on being a total unrelenting inconsiderate jackass.

Like I said...Just no.

As for the characters

In all honesty? I just liked the Wood and I'm not really sure if that's a character.

But as for Sarkan (who was always snapping, glaring, and growling, reminded me of my rabid chihuahua)

and A-jkidhl (because you can't honestly expect me to recall her name right?)

Sooo this just got awkward cause all I remember are the cons. *But* there are pros, I just can't really remember them. I mean, it couldn't have been that terrible, I did finish it, so there's that. Also, the story is good but I just didn't like how it was told. And the Wood is creepy (not buts here). Yeah...I'm shutting up now.

P.S. Also, this actually the first book I finished this month. So YAY me! I will conquer you, you neverending slump!

Maggie Stiefvater says

This novel effortlessly conjured up the familiar magic of my childhood favorites — it was like reaching for a sweater and finding my old worn favorite pushed into my hands. I'm going to wear it gleefully for a week, no matter the weather. This concludes my garment simile. Possibly fuller comments to come closer to publication date.

Robin Hobb says

I read *Uprooted* as an ARC or Advance Reading Copy. I promise that I do not review books I have not read.

This tale does have a distinctly fairy tale aura to it, but not in the sense of that distance we get from a tale when characters are The Princess or The Younger Son. Instead, this is a tale that the reader steps into, and experiences with the viewpoint character.

I'm going to tap dance around spoilers as I loathe and despise them, to instead point out that I loved the distinctive names of the characters, names that definitely gave them a flavor of our world but at the same time gave me that feeling that I'd just discovered a very old tale that was set outside the realm of the familiar tales I know by heart.

This story was not afraid to have a bit of silliness in it, and the flashes of peculiar humor that we so often encounter in our own lives. And it also did not wince from peering into the darkness that always waits at the edges of old tales.

Recommended.

Navessa says

WOW.

I need to create a new shelf and label it "all time favorites" and put like three books on there, of which, this

would DEFINITELY be one.

What an incredible fairy tale. This book is a lot like the The Wood that dominates this story, luring you close, whispering in your ear, offering you the most tantalizing temptations, if only you'll be persuaded into it. The difference between the two is that where The Wood is a dark, twisted creation that speaks only lies, this book delivers on its promises.

It's as if Novik sprinkled real magic within these pages. As if the words written on them are spells in and of themselves, able to lift from the paper and ensnare those who read them.

I'll freely admit that I was immediately caught within its grasp, and remained spellbound from beginning to end.

If you're a fan of beautifully crafted stories, slow burn romances, hideous monstrosities that are somehow all too human, and good triumphing over evil, read it. Now.

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Jessica ✶ ↵ Silverbow ↵ ✶ Rabid Reads-no-more says

Reviewed by: Rabid Reads

Imagine a powerful sorcerer living in a tower in the middle of a forest. He is over 150 years old, but he still appears to be a young man. Every 10 years, he picks a girl from one of the local villages to take back to his tower. The villagers say nothing, do nothing, b/c the sorcerer protects them from the Wood.

The villagers don't know what happens to the girls during their time in the tower, only that they come back *changed*. Grander, finer, more polished. Educated and dressed in fine clothes.

Different.

The girls are well paid for whatever it is they do in the tower. Alone with the wizard. In the middle of the Wood. When they've served their sentence, they return with a sack of silver to use as a dowry, but they don't marry. At least not anyone from their former home. They all leave, using the money to finance a fresh start somewhere else.

This sorcerer, called the Dragon, is alone except for the village girl, and even with her, he maintains his distance. She will age. She will die. He will do neither. Rather than forming attachments to impermanent creatures, he buries himself in order and precision and the resulting beauty of a task well done.

His nature is taciturn, impatient, and formal, so the villagers, despite their dependence on him for protection, fear him, *despise* him:

I had hated him, but I wouldn't have reproached him, any more than I would have reproached a bolt of lightning for striking my house. He wasn't a person . . .

Agnieszka is the antithesis of this sorcerer, this *Dragon*.

Left to his own devices, he would never have chosen her as his new companion, but Agnieszka has magic, and the King's Law states that any found with the talent must be trained, so choose her he does.

What follows is a compelling combination of stagnation and rebirth, misunderstandings and revelations, the fantastical and the horrific, and all of it is utterly captivating.

Tired literary devices felt new again:

She kissed me again and held me once more, and let me go. It did hurt more. It did.

I found myself reading and rereading the various passages. More than an image clearly formed in my mind, I felt what Agnieszka felt. I could have been her:

I had forgotten hours and days by then. My arms ached, my back ached, my legs ached. My head ached worst of all, some part of me tethered back to the valley, stretched out of recognizable shape and trying to make sense of myself when I was so far from anything I knew. Even the mountains, my constants, had disappeared. Of course I'd known there were parts of the country with no mountains, but I'd imagined I would still see them somewhere in the distance, like the moon. But every time I looked behind me, they were smaller and smaller, until finally they disappeared with one final gasp of rolling hills.

Novik perfectly captures human nature, plucking you from the physical world, and dropping you next to Agnieszka, making you an observer from within, so much more than a girl in a chair reading a book in Tennessee:

"I'm glad," I said, with an effort, refusing to let my mouth close up with jealousy. It wasn't that I wanted a husband and a baby; I didn't, or rather, I only wanted them the way I wanted to live to a hundred someday, far off, never thinking about the particulars. But they meant life: she was living, and I wasn't.

And beyond the simple beauty of her words, she creates real, believably flawed people characters.

Marek is a prince, not the crown prince, and he has no qualms about making his displeasure on that topic known, and when I met him . . . I didn't know what to think. He behaved abominably, but in a way that he himself wasn't absolutely abominable. Just self-interested. But redeemable. Until he isn't. Then suddenly you have hope for him again.

It was a cycle that I completed several times, and in the end . . . I'm still undecided.

But he was *real*. And he was one among many.

Kasia is Agnieszka's best and only friend. She is also the girl that everyone expected the Dragon to choose.

So imagine my dismay when shortly after she escapes that fate, she is abducted by one of the Wood's foul creatures.

Now imagine Agnieszka's dismay.

If you want to know whether or not Kasia is *saved*, you'll have to read the book for yourself (which you should do anyway, b/c AWESOME), but I *will* tell you that Agnieszka finds *something* in the Wood, and that *something* reminds me of one of my favorite Christian Schloe illustrations:

Fantastic(al), right? The whole book is like that.

UPROOTED by Naomi Novik is part fantasy, part fairy story, and all wonder. I haven't been as enamored by a tale since I was child, and though this is not a children's story, I still found myself smitten like a girl with ribbons in her hair, twirling in her favorite dress in the sunshine. This is a story that has carved it's place on my heart, and I enthusiastically endorse it as my top read of 2015.

Kat Kennedy says

This was another favourite of mine. Completely different to A Court of Thorns and Roses and Cruel Beauty, Uprooted is more dark and gothic. Unfortunately there is also a lot less kissing. But not to be discouraged. What kissing there is, is very lovely and, more importantly, Uprooted has a solid plot and is paced with ardent fervour. It's also funny as all hell and sit-on-the-edge-of-your-seat type of action-packed. When I started reading it, I really didn't want to put it down unless forced against my will. Agnieszka is a fantastic character. Witty, strong, loving and heroic. The Dragon is hilariously uptight and poncy. Cue Agnieszka quickly tearing down every expectation and wall he builds up between them and you have an odd couple taking on the most sinister forest you can think of.

It's brilliant.

This is a mini review since I posted a guide to Beauty and the Beast retellings here.

Rick Riordan says

I love a good fantasy rooted in folklore, and Novik does a great job mining the mythology of Eastern Europe for this novel. Young Agnieszka lives in a small town in an out-of-the-way valley where nothing much ever happens . . . except for the fact that they live near an evil Wood that occasional swallows trespassers, drives villagers mad, or sends monsters to destroy neighboring villages. Oh, and also they are protected by a wizard called the Dragon who lives in a tower and does his best to keep the evil magic of the Wood at bay. In return for his protection, the wizard takes one girl from the valley every ten years to serve him in the tower. These girls aren't killed, but they are never the same after their ten years of servitude, and they never stay in the

valley when they are released. Something about their servitude changes them . . .

Agnieszka worries for her best friend, Kasia, who is the most beautiful girl in the village. Everyone is sure Kasia will be snatched up by the Dragon at the next Choosing. Instead, much to her surprise, Agnieszka is chosen to serve the Dragon, and that's when she discovered how dark and frightening the world really is.

Novik does a great job twisting our expectations -- inverting the tropes about fairy tale villains and heroes. You'll get magic and monsters, princes and wizards, sorcery and chivalry, but not always in the ways you might expect. Agnieszka has to go through some pretty horrible stuff. In fact, her story got worse so many times I had to put the book down a few times and catch my breath. This trip through the evil Wood is not for the faint of heart. But if you want a fantasy with strong characters and brilliantly original variations on ancient stories, try *Uprooted*!
