



Firesong

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The Manth people are at last free to seek their promised land, led by Bowman and Kestrel's mother, a prophetess. But the journey is long and hard, filled with many dangers, enemies, distractions, and temptations. And each of the travelers is preoccupied with his or her own worries. Bowman is torn between his attraction to Sisi, a former princess, and what he believes is his destiny-to sacrifice himself for the good of the people. Kestrel also feels a pull toward a mission, toward something-but for some reason, she cannot envision her life beyond the journey.

Firesong Details

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From Reader Review Firesong for online ebook

Aiko Suzuki says

WHAT A FLIPPIN PLOT TWIST!

I am so glad I read all three books and didn't stop at the first one.

These books are like crazy good.

I don't now oka, I was just hypnotized, cause I didn't stop reading.

Please, I was reading this in the flipping bathtub.

That was too much information wasn't it, anyway, this trilogy is amazing, definitely would recommend, the plot twist was crazy.

Like seriously 'Child of the Prophet'...

The epilogue was like truly the best bit, well for me it is always cause I know what's going on, but God the ending got me.

Sisi, Kestrel, Bowman, Mumpo, Pinto, and IRA MANTH, where, what, why.

You will only understand if you read. READ THE TRILOGY.

Kübra Yaşmur says

2,5 ama 3 de?il.

K?sa olmasayd? ikinci kitab?n üzerine hemen ba?lamazd?m büyük ihtimalle. Neyse ki ikinci kitapla kar??la?t?r?ld???nda biraz daha iyiydi.

Meiran says

The only thing I could think the entire time I was making my way through this book was "why was this even written?" The Wind Singer was such a great contained book, and it told such a solid story that I had trouble overlooking the flaws in this one because I wasn't sure entirely why I reading it in the first place. While I liked the additions of Sisi and Mist, and I enjoyed the growth and change in Creoth, at the same time the main plot simple never grabbed my attention. WHY were they seeking the homeland? There was never an inkling of a hint in the first book that this was going to happen. WHY was Kestrel struggling with these feelings? WHY was Bowman so keen to find his destiny? None of these things were alluded to in the first novel, and so they felt improperly set up here in the third.

The other thing that bothered me was how easily characters were killed off. In between Slaves of the Mastery and Firesong, over 70 of the Manth people apparently died and are never mentioned or discussed. They simply go from a band of 101 to less than 40, seemingly overnight, with no mention of what happened or where the others have gone. Even assuming some people died along the route, even one per day, that's too many to understand. And it doesn't stop there, either. I realize it's a personal opinion, but there's entirely too much death for my tastes, and there's so much that the reader becomes desensitized to it by the time the

important deaths happen towards the end.

schneefink says

[Rufy Blesh (hide spoiler)]

Inknose says

There is something about this series that got under my skin like nothing else. I was absolutely transported by it. It's so fantastical, but so unlike any other fantasy. It doesn't fit the usual conventions of any kind of fantasy/epic story as far as I can tell. The first book starts out as a very cool story about a dystopian society, which we've all seen before, but the series quickly becomes a much more philosophical and at times downright trippy exploration of... well, pretty much every aspect of humanity. I realize that makes it sound all deep (which it is) but it's mostly an adventure in which you never EVER know what is going to happen next.

Angelica says

How can I write this review without breaking down into tears? Let's see... um. Firesong is the third (and last *sniff*) book of the Wind on Fire Trilogy. The Manth people have already escaped from the Mastery and are heading to the promised land. The land where the Manth people can live the end of their days in happiness. Bowman knows he will never reach the promised land, as it was prophesied that the child of the prophet will give themselves up for the good of the people. It doesn't help that he is growing an attraction to the beautiful former princess Sisi.

This is probably one of the most beautiful books I have ever read. In a way, the plot structure is very much like Percy Jackson. There is one big conflict that must be overcome by defeating very small conflicts. Its theme, however, would be very much like Les Misérables or the Bible. Characters repeatedly show signs of love and selflessness. (view spoiler) I think this is what makes the book beautiful. The overall action and adventure provides enough excitement, but it's the little things- such as the relationships between the characters- that make the book whole.

Even though it was a fantasy book, it felt real. I felt like the actions and reactions coming from the characters are very similar to ours. Except, in their little group, there was love. Intense, selfless love for each and every one of them.

I think William Nicholson did a great job with this book. It made me cry and scream and get emotional. I'm probably gonna read his other series.

Megan says

This was simply a beautiful end to a wonderful story. I truly loved every bit of it. The last full chapter was stunningly written, and the epilogue was sweet and fitting. I am so happy I found this series on a chance.

Lance says

"She felt young and strong and full of hope. And now, with a sudden intensity, she wanted to be alone. Why should it ever end? Why shouldn't we love each other forever?"

We do, came her brother's answer, We will.

Hand in hand, they left the bright glade together, and returned through the trees to their people. They said nothing about what had changed, for what could be said that they did not already know?"

Firesong was a heart-wrenching ending to the *Wind on Fire* series, but with the proliferation of characters and mixed messages about puberty, I found myself more frustrated with the book than enlightened by its messages.

The first incident the Manth people encounter on their journey, the separation of the young fertile girls from the main group by bandits, sets the uncomfortable tone for the rest of the novel. For the maturity and adulthood of the female character seems to rob them of their agency, their individuality, as witnessed by the homogenisation of the Manth girls (with the exception of Kestrel), and the need for the young men to rescue them. This theme appears again and again, with many of the adult female characters being paired off and appearing as weak side-kicks to their stronger male partners. The final few chapters obsess over marriages and child-bearing, casting these named female characters as nothing more than the "*young mothers*", where the young men increasingly monopolise the physical tasks that are essential to the story. I found all of this incredibly disappointing, as Kestrel's strong will was one of the best and most unique features of this series. To have her drowned out by Sisi, who is nothing more than an exaggerated self-suffering beauty who relies on a man for all her happiness and justification for existence, made me feel soiled. Why is Sisi special just because she is beautiful? Why does she get everything she wants, without any action required on her part, without showing any motivation which might have made her admirable if flawed? What sort of message is that sending to young adult readers?

The one redeeming feature of this book is Kestrel's beautiful sacrifice. Bowman's complex over his nature as a chosen-one fated to die makes him unsuitable for the role, even his humility as saviour is arrogant in comparison with Kestrel's all-consuming, self-effacing love. She is the true chosen. She holds the true power. And she is not awed or celebrated even in memory, she is forgotten by her own mother at her death, and not mentioned at all by any of her family but Bowman. Kestrel's overwhelming compassion in which she allowed Bowman to take ownership of the angst and pride of the chosen-one on her behalf is rendered with such simplicity it is utterly believable. "*You are not to be the saviour. You are to be saved.*" She was brave, and selfless, and talented. I just wish there had been more recognition of what she did for her people. Alright, so she didn't pick a husband and bear him half-a-dozen children, but she contributed everything of her body

mind and soul, and no one seemed to care.
I care, Kess. I really admire you.

Lillerina says

I found I missed the political critique that the other two had. I wanted more political allegory. This book felt less clever and less earnest than the previous two. A fitting end to the trilogy, maybe, but as a stand-alone, less of a good book. Also, kind of racist. I mean, woman-stealing bandits who wear scarves wrapped around their heads? Seriously, Nicholson?

Ali says

This is the first book I've ever cried upon. It's the first time, in which my blasphemous tears disgraced a hallow shrine. A perfect ending to a perfect trilogy. and oh, the memories!
Yet, the ending is a little puzzling. I may have inerpretated it in a wrong way. But for me, even though there are diffrent apprehensions that I've read in the internet to the end of the book, it fits to say that I consider what i believe on what happened to Bowman and Kestrel is the ideal and most beautiful ending for a trilogy as hugely ambitious as The Wind On Fire trilogy.

Marya says

I know the ending was supposed to be sweet and sentimental, but as an only child and an introvert, I found it more than a little creepy. The series did end, though it achieved finality with a neat little bow (a neat little creepy bow).

Holly says

Meh...much as I liked the first two, this one definitely wasn't up to scratch. Despite being pivotal to the world's salvation, Bowman and Kestrel's journey to the homeland was incredibly uneventful - no battles, no real 'world scale' drama. Not to mention Sisi seems to have had a complete character transplant from one book to another, losing a lot of much-needed humour. Character development is all well and good, but she was unrecognisable as the Princess from 'Slaves of the Mastery'. Her relationship with Bowman felt forced and I couldn't really cheer for them. She became flat and seemed to care less about Kestrel as the story went on, as though she had no need of her now she had a boyfriend.

Bowman himself was more irritating than usual. His angst and complete and utter passivity were annoying in previous books, but are amped to the full in Firesong. I was irked beyond belief that it was Kestrel who had to give her life in the end and not him. The implication that it had to be her because she had no interest in marriage and children was also unfortunate, as though someone is worth less if they don't intend to start a family. I'm probably reading too much into it (hell, I thought the first book was an ode to socialism at the ~annoyingly precocious~ age of 12,) but it seemed implied. Whatever the reason, she was a far more interesting character than Bowman - one of the better female characters out there, quite frankly - and the

conclusion annoyed me.

Christine Rowntree says

Suuuuch a dissapointment. The trilogy is still a childhood favourite of mine but the best one by far was *Slaves of the Mastery*, with *The Wind Singer* a close second and *Firesong* a distant third. I feel like Nicholson wrote this just because he felt the need to make it a trilogy. I mean, i love trilogies as much as the next person but not at the expense of a well written story.

The overall plot barely held my attention, it was just so boring. The only reason i pushed through was because i cant not finish a book. You never know when they may take off. This one never took off. Its funny because i was wondering why, before reading the trilogy, i could remember the first two books really well and barely recall the third. Ding ding. We have our answer.

In stark contrast to the fast pace of the first novel this one has a tendency to drag on and on and on, especially when it comes to the descriptions. So many times, all i could think was, 'come on mate, get on with it, we get it, its snowing.' Apart from a few parts (*The Barra Klin* and *The Island*) it was an utter snooze fest, which is a shame as the general outline has alot of potential.

I got really sick of the connection between Bowman and Kestrel. Especially when she died but kept sharing his body. Why couldnt she die? We get it. They always go together but it would have been much better building up all that togetherness then have it taken away. Its almost like they were TOO special and it ruined it.

The Charecter developments, and lack of, were quite frustrating. They either didnt change when they should have or changed for the worse. It would have been amazing to see Hanno grow into a stronger man. All through the books he had retained his passive nature, and that was fine up untill they left the Mastery but then, especially considering all they had lost and the hardships they kept facing, he should have taken proper charge of the group and become the leader they needed.

Then there were charecters who changed too much like Sisi. She did a complete 180 in personality and lost so much of what made her unique. She was turned into a hard, joyless, pessimistic drip and seemed to care about no one but Bowman, yet with all that change was still fixated on her beauty and her scars. What?

If you read the first two, you should probably read this one, only for the sake of knowing the full stroy as Nicholson wrote it.

Suz says

A little about the author

William Nicholson was born in 1948, and grew up in Sussex and Gloucestershire. *The Wind Singer*, won the Smarties Prize Gold Award on publication in 2000, and the Blue Peter Book of the Year Award in 2001. He lives in Sussex with his wife, the social historian Virginia Nicholson, and their three children.

Authors website:<http://www.williamnicholson.com/>

Plot summery reviewed

"I hate school! I hate ratings! I won't reach higher! I won't strive harder! I won't make tomorrow better than today!"

The novel follows the Hath's who are a relaxed family who despise the way the city they live in is ruled by ratings. From a young age people are educated and examined repeatedly and their scores calculate the privileges a family is entitled to, such as where they may live and what colour clothing they may wear. The Hath family see that the system for what it is, a society that imprisons them.

So we find that in the walled city of Aramanth the only way forward in life is to get good results, not that bad right, wrong because what freedoms do good ratings get you, a nice house, new cloths or new social standing. Which is not appealing to the Haths, but to be unsuccessful in test and to have a poor rating seen as a great source of shame so they keep to themselves.

The city is kept in order by a colour classifications system the governing Examiners use to dictate what people can wear, where they can live and roam and what jobs they can do. The levels are grey, maroon, orange, scarlet and white, with grey as the lowest and at white the highest. The Emperor is the only person allowed to wear blue.

So, when one day Kestrel hath has enough and snaps in school, she changes more than her families status she unwitting starts of something that will bring down the wrath of the chief examiner. Kestrel continues to defy the system and has to flee her home. she ends up running into the Emperor of Aramanth himself. who is thought to be the ruler of the city, but she finds he is just a puppet of the High Examiners, that is kept in control by a bowl of sweets!

The Emperor warns Kestrel of the evil Morah and their influence in the city. As well as the way things used to be when the mysterious Wind Singer that stands in the city arena worked and that to fix things she must find its 'voice'.

Armed with a map the Emperor gives her she sets off to find the 'voice' with her twin brother, Bowman and Mumpo, who has an unshakable and unwanted affection for Kestrel. along the way they meet tribes and individuals including the fearsome nomadic clans of Ombarka and Omchaka in the mist of a war the trio are branded spies and have to prove there innocence to continue on-wards.

The journey eventually leads them to the Halls of the Morah, the resting place for the evil that has taken control of the city. The trio finally retrieve the voice of the Wind Singer but in the process Bowman wakes the terrible Zars and bonds with the Morah while Mumpo is brainwashed into being a Zar, one of the army of the Morah. They flee from the pursuit of by the beautiful, evil and unstoppable Zars by racing back to Aramanth and arriving just in time to return the Wind Singer's voice that emits a powerful song that destroys the Zars, and saves Aramanth.

I instantly fell in love with the Hath family. I was expecting a good fantasy story, but the story I read exceeded my expectations. The characterizations were very well done, and often very amusing. The conversation Bowman had with an official as Kestrel climbed the Wind Singer had me laughing out loud. The character of Mumpo is also wonderful. I love the descriptions of Ira Hath's multi-colored blanket and the simple defiance it evokes. Plus little Pinto who is under rated, she is so sweetly written. The world that Aramanth sits in is a richly imagined but a very fresh and non stereotyped world. The world described here shows the ability of the author to imagine something bold and new and very engaging.

The book is written with young adults as an intended audience, but adult readers should enjoy this too - and younger children may well love it too. As a rough guide, I would probably not give it to anyone much

younger than 10, or older than 95, although the latter only because the print might then be a little too small.

All in all this was a richly imagined book with good characters, some good humor and plenty of action as well as things to make the reader pause and consider afterwards - particularly on the nature of freedom.

Slaves of the mastery

"The city of Aramanth has become a kinder place, but in becoming kinder it has also become weaker, making it the perfect target for the ruthless soldiers of the Mastery.

Only Kestrel Hath, daughter of Ira and Hanno Hath, escapes the armies and rescues the silver voice from the burnt wind singer. "

This book opens with the city of Aramanth and how it has changed since events from *The Wind Singer*. The walls that surrounded the rigid city have all been torn down and are rubble, the poorer districts abandoned. The exam system forgotten and coloured clothing rules are relaxed. The change came about when the wind singer was restored to glory and the evil force known as the Morah was banished from the city.

However with this change the city is also weaker and news of the great city's change spreads as far as a distant place known as the Mastery. They send an army to take the city for themselves, commanded by young Marius Semeon Ortiz, they destroy the city, enslaving the entire population. That is except for Kestrel Hath who escapes in the ruckus and finds herself alone after the brutal battle that leaves the city burned and the Manth gone. She vows to avenge her people on the man who led the attack, on the unknown Mastery, and on Ortiz himself. By following their trail she finds her way to them through the help of another who is also on their way to the mastery but for a marriage. Kestrel knows she must find her brother Bowman, and he in turn must find a way of understanding the secrets of the mysterious Singer people. Only then can the pair begin to strike out against the Mastery and begin a voyage that will bring the Manth people back to their former stature.

The Manth people march for days to reach the Mastery, a beautiful country they discover is built up entirely on slave labor. They are branded with irons and given jobs. Many are unhappy but find if they disobey their masters, a member of their community is burned in an iron cage before their eyes. The cages are constantly occupied and guarded to ensure their co-operation. Though some of the people begin to actually enjoy their freedom to work as whatever they wish, they discover that every single person in the Mastery is a slave, except for the Master, ruler of the land, himself. Hanno Hath, father of Kestrel, signs up to be a librarian, while Bowman becomes a night watchman looking after sheep, in order to keep an eye out for Kestrel. The old emperor has no skills and trains to be a shepherd allowing him to feel useful for the first time.

Following the instinctive call of her twin brother Bowman across the desert Kestrel faints with exhaustion. She is rescued by the beautiful Sirharasi (Sisi), Johdila of Gang. Kestrel meets Sisi, the spoilt Johdila engaged by her parents to Marius Ortiz, she becomes Sisi's closest friend and begins to open her eyes to another world.

As one of the few people who has seen Sisi unveiled, Kestrel becomes her official servant and 'mutual friend'. She discovers that Sisi is also travelling to the Mastery to marry Ortiz, the man who led the attack on Aramanth. Kestrel decides to try to use the considerable might of Gang's army, the Johjan Guards, to overthrow the Mastery, and she convinces Zohon, the Guards' conceited leader, that Sisi loves him, and that she will give him a sign to show this.

One night Bowman meets the one-eyed hermit known as "Dogface", that tells him about his lineage as the

son of the prophet and that Bowman's mother, Ira Hath, is descended from the ancient prophet, Ira Manth. He has great powers that belong to the Singer people. Bowman tests these new powers by speaking with a cow, moving a stick without touching it, and later speaking to a cat called mist, that Dogface leaves behind. Mist's ambition is to learn how to fly, but as Bowman's powers are initially limited and untested, he doesn't and can't teach Mist. Bowman, who has been training his mind to move objects, has also caught the attention of Marius and has been engaged as his 'truth teller'.

Meanwhile, Mumpo, another Manth slave, joins the Manaxa. The Manaxa is a fight where two competitors attempt to stab each other with spiked armor until either one dies or is driven out of the arena, and is considered a great honor to compete in the Mastery. He shows considerable talent at this and heavy favorite. Their friend Mumpo has been perfecting the art of the killing dance of the Mastery, the manaxa, and at the wedding kills the reigning champion finally.

At the wedding of the beautiful Sisi and Ortiz they both fall for the wrong people, Sisi for Bowman and Ortiz for Kestrel.

Zohan who Kestrel tricked thinks he is rescuing Sisi from the Mastery but he ends up instigating a battle against Ortiz and his men but all the people in the Mastery are bound by the Master's will and attack his army.

Mumpo is desperate in his search for Kestrel, killing many with his new skills to try and help her, whether they be Mastery Citizens or in the Johjan Guards.

In an energetic finish, Bowman faces off with the Master. He uses his connection to the terrifying Morah and his mind powers to mind duel with the Master. Kestrel and Ortiz come find them both and with Bowman temporarily distracted and the Master commands Ortiz to kill Kestrel. Despite his love for her, he is unable to resist the Master's will and obeys. With the sword centimetres from her heart, Bowman kills the Master and Ortiz is released from his will. Mumpo enters the room and sees Ortiz with his arms around Kestrel, and gets the wrong idea. Mumpo smashes Ortiz's head and breaks his neck. Released from his power, the Master's army dissipates and sets about destroying the city in a frenzy, and Zohan seizes control.

Finally free to leave, Ira Hath asserts that they must seek out the homeland, as "the wind is rising". Though many of the Manth people choose to stay behind and make a life for themselves where they are, a small group resolve to trust in Ira's prophecy, and together along with Sisi and her servant Lunki, they set out in search of the homeland.

Fire song

The Manth people deliberate over what to do next, now that the Mastery is in ruins. After the defeat of the Master, alone and displaced, they seek a new homeland but have no real destination and very little food. The story picks up with the flight of the Hath family, and their crew of other willing Manth families and friends, away from the ruined Mastery. Ira Hath leads the way, prophesising their eventual success but also her own, sad demise.

Ira Hath is the descendant of Ira Manth, a great prophetess. She has a vision of the Manth people's true homeland. Throughout their journey in the book the Manth people travel with only Ira's guidance, and she becomes weaker as they go, knowing she will eventually die of prophecy. She knows that if she continues to feel the warmth on her face they are heading in the right direction.

She gets weaker as they near their goal which scares the Manth people, they worry she may die before they get to the homeland. Her husband Hanno, fears her death but tries to keep moral up.

Bowman and Kestrel Hath, have a lot more to worry about. Bowman is anxious awaiting his summons from the Sirene his training is hard and with his new teacher he finds it hard to concentrate. He must be trained by the great Albard, also called the Master of the ruined Mastery. Kestrel is with him on his journey as well as Jumper, the man-woman Singer who can change forms and personalities to please people.

In the end it is revealed that Kestrel is the one who is destined to give her life not Bowman, having picked up Albard's teachings along the way. Bowman is in fact the 'Meeting place' the point at which the great evil and the great kindness of the world will annihilate one another. This is because he was once host to the Morah as one of the Zars, and is one of the great Singer people too.

Upon reaching the homeland, Ira's life ends, her destiny fulfilled. Kestrel, too, ends her life with all the other Singers, singing the Firesong to destroy the Morah and ultimately give humanity a fresh start which allows the Manth to be safe.

The epilogue is set some 8 years later. We see the Manth people settled in their new homes, with various people married new children. Bowman and Sisi now rule over Gang and visit when they can. We also see Pinto and Mumpo betrothed.

These books were good, I did take me a while to get into them but it's worth it to see how a book ends I believe. I liked how you follow Bowman on his journey only to find that actually Kestrel is the hero. And how little Pinto is so brave and true and finally gets noticed by Mumpo. A great adventure and if you only read book one it's still ok but I would prefer to get that chance to see the characters develop and grow.

My star rating is: four

Posted 25th June 2013 by Suzanne Gardenier

Megan says

"I don't want to do any of those things you said. I want - I want - to make things right."

"Then so you shall."

"Is it so easy?"

"Not easy. Not easy at all. Think how much is wanting to make things wrong. All the fear in the world, and the violence that comes from the fear, and the hatred that comes from the violence, and the loneliness that comes with the hatred. All the unhappiness, all the cruelty, it gathers like clouds in the air, and grows cold and dark and heavy, and falls like grey snow in thick layers over the land. Then the world is all muffled and numb, and no one can hear each other or feel each other. Think how sad and lonely that must be."

This, the above quote, is what *Wind on Fire* really is in just a few words. It is a story of a family and their people, and how they made their way from the muffled to the open, their progress slow and often hindered. *Firesong* is the last of three, and it brings the story to a beautiful and painful close. For the last twenty pages of this book, I sat and totally ignored everything around me, devouring the end. If you like fantasy, good vs.

evil, and books like *The Chronicles of Narnia* and *The Lord of the Rings* and *The Paradise War*, you should read these books. They're a quick/easy read and a deep, *weird* fantasy. This is a story you will never forget.

Light language, strong violence and gruesome content.
